SHORT STORIES AND ESSAYS

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Selected by

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Authorized by the Minister of Education of Ontario
for use in the Secondary Schools
of the Province

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PREFACE

I

This collection of *Short Stories and Essays* is designed, like the companion volume of *Shorter Poems*, to afford material for reading which may stimulate and develop the taste for books, and the power of feeling in some measure literary charm and excellence. Of the two kinds of prose literature named in the title, stories, like poetry, appeal chiefly to the imagination and emotions. The love for stories scarcely needs to be awakened; story-telling was a natural form of entertainment for very primitive men, as it still is even for very young children. In choosing the selections, variety has been sought, in the hope that, as many readers have many tastes, something may be offered specially congenial to each individual; at the same time, it is believed, all the stories are of a nature to have some general attraction for those for whom this book is intended. It may be admitted that the majority of these stories have characteristics not likely to be fully appreciated by the pupils. The idea, however, that the young can benefit only—or benefit most—by reading what is wholly within their easy comprehension is not borne out by experience. In this respect the multitude of books in our day written down to the capacities of the young, is, perhaps, a disadvantage; the later generation miss the development which came to their fathers from the reaching out after something beyond easy grasp. In all forms of art—music, and painting as well as literature—familiarity with what is excellent is the only method of learning to

appreciate it; the prolonged and sluggish loitering with mediocrity is little likely to promote intellectual growth.

It is scarcely necessary to repeat what was urged in the preface to *Shorter Poems*—that the basis of literary study is interest and enjoyment; and these the teacher must make it his chief aim to cultivate. These stories should be read, in the first place at least (and naturally will be read) just as boys and girls read books which they select for their own entertainment and on their own initiative. Such an attitude is scarcely possible if they are possessed by the thought that they are preparing to give an outline of the plot, or a sketch of the characters, or to meet any other of the tests usually set at examinations. The premature analysis and detailed study of something in which the pupil has not already become interested, will almost certainly beget weariness and distaste—not enjoyment.

II

To awaken interest in the remaining selections—loosely classed under the titles of Essays—will be a matter of greater difficulty, as, to the editor, it has been extremely difficult to find material of this kind in any adequate degree suitable to the aims of the volume. When we leave Narrative with its plot interest and concrete incidents, we pass into the less attractive realm of thought and reflection; there we are dea'ing mainly with abstractions and generalizations—things which are wont to repel even much more mature minds than those of secondary school pupils.

This may have been one reason why the Essay did not, as the story, spring up spontaneously in some early literary period. It was not until the later half of the six-

teenth century that the Essay, as a recognized literary form, made its appearance. One may, indeed, notice a tendency in much earlier times to something of the kind; its beginnings have been traced back to the Epistle as found in Classical literature. Two of the best known of the letters addressed by Cicero to his friend Atticus—the *De Senectute* and the *De Amicitia*—may well be regarded as examples of what we now call the Essay Proper—the familiar and personal essay. The best examples of this literary species leave a similar impression to that which one carries away after listening to an attractive personality pouring forth, without premeditation, his ideas on some congenial theme. There need not necessarily be anything very informing in the essay; the theme may often be commonplace; but it is freshened and enlivened by the writer's own personal experiences and emotions, as well, of course, as by his literary art. In the following pages these characteristics are best exemplified in Lamb's *New Year's Eve*.

This literary form in its essential lineaments and the use of the word "essay" to characterize it, make their first appearance in 1580, in a volume entitled *Essais*, by the French writer Montaigne. The title was used by the author as a modest disclaimer of any pretence at completeness or profundity; his discussions—none of which are very long, and many very short—he wishes to be regarded merely as *attempts*. "I desire to appear," he writes in his Preface, "in mine own genuine, simple, and ordinary manner, without study and artifice; for it is myself I paint." Notice particularly his last statement, which is significant for the familiar essay. In 1597, following Montaigne's precedent, Bacon published his *Essays;* which he defines as "dispersed meditations;" and some

half-century later, a much less distinguished English writer, Joseph Glanvill, describes the literary essay as "an imperfect offer at a subject."

In England, notwithstanding the influence of Montaigne, it was not until 1668 that the really typical essay was exemplified in a book entitled *Several Discourses by Way of Essays*, by Cowley—in his time one of the best known of literary men. The essay proper was at length fully established as a popular form by Steele and Addison in *The Spectator;* and from that day to this it has continued a familiar species especially in periodicals. At the present time one can scarcely open a copy of a literary weekly without finding essays of this character.

Meanwhile "Essay"—because its original meaning made it a convenient designation for treatises professedly modest in their aims—was being applied to compositions essentially different from those of Montaigne—conspicuously, for example in the case of Locke's *Essay Concerning the Human Understanding* (1690), which is actually a long and abstract philosophical investigation. And so a fashion arose of applying the term to a great variety of miscellaneous writings, where the name conveys nothing more definite than the suggestion of a treatment of some theme or other, in comparatively short compass and with no claim to exhaustiveness. So we have such essays as those of Hume, J. S. Mill, Macaulay, or Huxley, which, although they may entertain, aim almost exclusively at instruction. On the other side, the essays of Addison, Lamb, Hazlitt, or Thackeray are read mainly for pleasure; they may give stimulus to thought, but personality and artistic charm dominate.

Both varieties are included in the present collection, as well as some other extracts, such as *The Train to Mariposa*, or *When the Rain Came*, to which the term "Essay."

loose as it is, can perhaps scarcely be applied. The characteristics of the essay proper are exemplified in the selections from Lynd, Priestley, and Milne, though not as adequately as in that from Lamb, the greatest of our familiar essayists. Beginning with these essays and passing on, in succession, to *On a Painted Face*, *Tears*, *On Word-Magic*, and *Abraham Lincoln*, we may note a gradual transition; the artistic qualities and the author's personality recede into the background; the conveyance of facts or opinions becomes the dominating aim.

III

Books with the characteristics last-mentioned constitute a very large part of what is called literature, and though inferior in beauty and power to literature in the highest sense of the word, have a just claim to be thus included. A great deal of the reading of every thoughtful and properly educated man is directed—not to imaginative experience and aesthetic gratification—but to the increase of his knowledge, the widening and intensifying of his interests, to the acquiring of new ideas, and the attainment of new points of view; and indeed all this is needful to any one who would enjoy a wholesome and satisfactory intellectual life worthy of a cultivated man.

The awakening of intellectual curiosity and of interests beyond the merely personal and practical, should be among the most valuable results of school education. If, in later life, these are to be kept alive and developed, it must be, in the main for most of us, through books, and to a large extent through such books as we have just been speaking of, which do not belong to the highest and most permanent kind of literature. By reading these we remedy some of the defects of our social environment;

which under average conditions afford very little of intellectual stimulus and interest.

The comparative flatness of ordinary "society," its pronounced tendency to produce a sense of boredom—at least in the absence of the usual substitute for talking, like card-playing, dancing and the like—arises in large measure from the small knowledge and narrow interests of those who compose it. Further, it is the same limitations which make solitude so burdensome to many, to whom any sort of excitement or any trivial occupation offers a welcome escape from the emptiness of their own minds. Now as a fact, the larger part of literature prescribed for study in the secondary schools belongs to the domain of poetry, drama, and fiction; we read it for pleasure, for its beauty, and for the imaginative widening of our experience that comes from sympathy with the characters and emotions represented. In the teaching of it, the attention of the pupils is naturally centred on literary and artistic qualities. Unfortunately, many of them have little aptitude for feeling these or for apprehending the subtle characteristics of style and treatment on which they depend. And even among those who in adolescence may in some measure be drawn to imaginative works, many in later years lose this inclination through the almost overwhelming utilitarian influences of the conditions of life which are the lot of most Canadians.

All this serves to emphasize the importance of winning intelligent pupils to feel that interest and pleasure are to be found not merely in novels, but in books where the main aim is information—not merely (to use De Quincey's phrasing) in the Literature of Power but in the Literature of Knowledge. There should be a study in the class itself of prose selections for their thought, not for their form. The student should be interested in the opinions,

ideas, facts expressed; style and treatment, diction, paragraph structure, plan, etc., should be wholly subordinated, as of course they are by any sensible reader who really cares for the matter in hand. In such of the selections as *On a Painted Face, Patriotism and Sport,* or *Laurentides Park,* young people may well have opinions of their own, be able to discuss intelligently the ideas of the author, and, within the limited range of their own experience and ideas, find illustrations, confirmation, or disproof of what is asserted. They should certainly not leave school with the impression that, either in literature or in what they themselves write, so-called "fine writing" is admirable for its own sake. What makes style great is the effective and complete presentation of the ideas and feelings which the writer wishes to convey. We recognize this at once in this literature of knowledge of which we have been speaking; it is also true of the most intangible and exquisite poetry; even here the richness and subtlety of the impression to be conveyed are the only justifications for the elaboration and complexity of the language.

W. J. A.

Toronto, April 22nd, 1928

CONTENTS

PART I		PAGE
The Essence of a Man	*Alan Sullivan*	1
Patriotism and Sport	*G. K. Chesterton (1874-)*	11
Some Hints on Reading	*James, Viscount Bryce (1839-1922)*	17
Juke Judkins	*Charles Lamb (1775-1834)*	25
On a Painted Face	*A. G. Gardiner (1865-)*	34
The Cawing of Rooks	*J. A. Thomson (1861-)*	37
Why I Stick to the Farm	*Peter McArthur (1866-1924)*	43
On Hating Strangers	*J. B. Priestley (1874-)*	50
The Doll's House	*Katherine Mansfield (1889-1923)*	55
The Peal of Bells	*Robert Lynd (1879-)*	65
The Case for the Artist	*A. A. Milne (1882-)*	72
The Secret Sharer	*Joseph Conrad (1857-1927)*	77
Geese	*W. H. Hudson (1841-1924)*	131
Laurentides Park	*W. H. Blake (1861-1924)*	138

PART II		
'Varsity versus McGill	*"Ralph Connor" (C. W. Gordon, 1860-)*	143
The Kitten	*Robert Lynd (1879-)*	171
On Big Words	*A. G. Gardiner (1865-)*	178
The Garden-Party	*Katherine Mansfield (1889-1923)*	183
Tears	*Desmond MacCarthy (1878-)*	203
When the Rain Came	*Peter McArthur (1866-1924)*	208
Abraham Lincoln	*James, Viscount Bryce (1839-1922)*	213
A Municipal Report	*"O. Henry" (W. S. Porter, 1862-1910)*	224

PAGE

Initiation - - - - *Joseph Conrad* (*1857-1927*) 244
The Art of Holiday - - *Holbrook Jackson* (*1871-*) - - - 250
Markheim - - - - *R. L. Stevenson* (*1850-1894*) 261

PART III

The Blackwater Pot - - *C. G. D. Roberts* (*1860-*) 283
The Game - - - - *Robert Lynd* (*1879-*) - 301
On Saying "Please" - - *A. G. Gardiner* (*1865-*) 307
The Play of Animals - - *J. A. Thomson* (*1861-*) 314
A Moral Exigency - - *Mary E. Wilkins Freeman* (*1862-*) - - - 320
On Word-Magic - - - *A. G. Gardiner* (*1865-*) 335
Seaton's Aunt - - - *Walter de la Mare* (*1873-*) - - - 340
The Bogey of Space - - *J. B. Priestley* (*1874-*) 380
The Train to Mariposa - - *Stephen Leacock* (*1869-*) - - - 385
The Three Strangers - - *Thomas Hardy* (*1840-1928*) 392
New Year's Eve - - - *Charles Lamb* (*1775-1834*) 421
Notes - - - - - - - - - - - - 429

SHORT STORIES AND ESSAYS

PART I

THE ESSENCE OF A MAN

Through level lines of streaming snow, a huge figure loomed large and portentous. Vanishing in blinding gusts, it ever and ever appeared again, thrusting itself onward with dogged persistence. Across flat and frozen plains forged the great piston-like legs, driving down his snowshoes with a clock-like regularity that suggested, rather than told of, enormous muscular force. Behind him, knee-deep, toiled five yellow-coated, black-muzzled dogs, their shoulders jammed tight into their collars, their tawny sides rippling with the play of straining tendons; and, last of all, a long, low toboggan lurched indomitably on, the trampled trail breaking into a surge of powdered snow under its curving bow.

Into the teeth of the gale pushed this pigmy caravan—a gale that was born on the flat shores of Hudson Bay, that breasted the slopes of the Height of Land, that raged across the blank white expanse of Lac Seul, and was now shrieking down, dire and desolate, to the ice-bound and battlemented borders of Lake Superior. It was a wind that had weight. Tom Moore felt its vast and impalpable force, as he leaned against it when he stopped for breath. It assaulted him—it tore steadily, relentlessly, at him, as if seeking to devour—it lashed the stinging grains into his face, and into the open mouths of his panting dogs—it smoothed out the crumpled trail as the wake of a ship is obliterated by closing waters—till, a moment after his

passing, the snow ridges lay trackless and unruffled. Still, however insignificant in these formless wastes, that silent progress held steadily on; and so it had held from early morn. These black specks on a measureless counterpane, guided by some unfailing instinct that lurked far back in the big half-breed's brain, were making an unswerving line for a wooded point that thrust out a faint and purple finger, far ahead in the gathering dusk. As they drew slowly in, the wind began to abate its force, and Tom, peering out from the mass of ice that was cemented to his mouth and eyes, looked for some sheltering haven. The dogs smelled the land, and more eagerly flung themselves into the taut traces, while over them gathered the shadows of the welcome woods.

Peter Anderson, the Hudson's Bay factor at Lac Seul, was low in provisions, and had sent to the Ignace post a curt suggestion that the deficiency be supplied; and Tom Moore's laden toboggan was the brief but practical answer to his letter. The three-hundred-pound load was made up of the bare necessities of life—pork, flour, and the like; these, delivered, would be worth seventy-five cents a pound and thirty dollars a sack respectively; and Tom was the arbiter of transportation. In summer his canoe thrust its delicate bows through the waterways that interlaced the two posts, and in winter his snowshoes threaded the stark and frozen wilderness. He had always travelled alone on the ice. Nature had moulded him with such a titan frame, so huge and powerful a body, so indomitable and fearless a soul, that he had become accustomed to laughing at the fate that overtook many of his tribe. They disappeared every now and then, utterly, silently, and mysteriously; but ever Big Tom moved on, the incarnation of force and of life that mocked at death.

When, two days before, MacPherson had summoned

him to the Ignace post, and pointed to the pile of provisions, and said laconically: "For Anderson, at Lac Seul," Tom had merely grunted, "How," and set out to harness his dogs. But the last day had brought him more serious reflection. By the flight of the goose it was two hundred miles and by the winter trail perhaps two hundred and fifteen; and of these forty now lay behind him.

He made his camp, he lit his fire, he flung to each ravenous dog a frozen whitefish, and ate, himself, almost as sparingly; then, rolled in his rabbit-skin blanket, he lay down on his back, and looked up at the winking stars.

About midnight the wind changed and veered into the south-east, bringing with it a clammy drizzle, half snow, half rain, that plastered the trees with a transparent enamel, and spread over the surface of the earth a sheet of ice, half an inch thick, and exceeding sharp.

In that shivering hour which heralds the dawn, a branch cracked sharply a little distance from the camp. One of the dogs twitched an ear, and Tom was too deep in sleep to notice it. The five huskies were buried in snow beneath a tree, from a branch of which swung a sheaf of rigid fish, suspended in the air for security. But, in the half light, something moved, a something that turned upon the smouldering fire great luminous eyes—globes that seemed to receive the glow of dull coals, and give it out again in a changing iridescence. Around the eyes was a white-grey mask, crowned by short, black-pointed ears; behind the ears moved noiselessly a tawny body, with heavy legs and broad, soft pads. It slipped from tree to tree, touching the ground lightly here and there, till the great lynx hung, motionless and menacing, above the sleeping camp. It stopped, sniffed the tainted air, and then stared, fascinated, at the sheaf of fish, which hung, slowly revolving, in tantalizing proximity. Silently,

with dainty and delicate caution, the lynx laid itself out on the branch, and, clinging tight, stretched out a curved forepaw; it just touched its object, and set it swaying. Again the paw went out, and again fell short. A quicker thrust, and the big pads slipped on the frozen wood, and, with a scream, the great cat fell fair on the sleeping dogs.

In an instant the air split with a frenzy of noise. Tom sprang up, and saw a maelstrom of yellow forms, a convulsive, contorted mass, from which came the vicious snap of locking jaws, the yelp of agonized animals, and the short, coughing bark of the lynx. Around and in and out they rolled, buried in fur and snow. The wolf was born again in the huskies, and, with all their primal ferocity, they assailed each other and a common enemy. Two of them crawled away, licking great wounds from deadly claws; and then gradually the battle waned, till it died in a fugue of howls, and the marauder escaped, torn and bleeding, into the silence from which he had come.

Tom stood helpless, and then, when the three came limping home, went over to where his two best dogs lay, licking great gashes—for the lynx had literally torn them open. As he approached, they lifted their black lips, till the long fangs shone, ivory white; and death and defiance gurgled in their throbbing throats. A glance told him that nothing could be done; the frost was already nipping the raw flesh till they snapped at their own vitals in desperation. He raised his axe, once, twice—and his two best huskies lay on a blanket of bloodstained snow, with twitching bodies and glazing eyes.

Then, very soberly, he examined the others. They were still fit for harness; so, in the yellow light that began to flood the world, he shortened his traces, twisted his feet into his toe straps, and, with never a look behind, faced again the burden of the day.

The trail was hard to break. The crust, that would not carry the dogs, was smashed down, and tilted cakes of ice fell over on his shoes, a deck load that made them a weariness to lift. Behind floundered the toiling huskies, the leader's nose glued to the tail of the trailing shoes. What vast reserve of strength did man and beast then draw upon, Tom could not have told you; but, hour after hour, the small, indomitable train went on. As the day lengthened, Tom shortened his stride; for the dogs were evidently giving out, and his thigh muscles were burning like hot wires. At four o'clock the team stopped dead, the leader swaying in his tracks. The big half-breed, running his hands over the shaking body, suddenly found one of them warm and wet—it was sticky with blood. Then he saw blood on the trail; looking back, he saw crimson spots as far as the eye could distinguish them; lifting the matted hide, he revealed a gash from which oozed great, slow drops. The valiant brute had drained his life out in a gory baptism of that killing trail. Then Tom sat down in dumb despair, took the lean yellow head upon his knees, smoothed the tawny fur back from those clouding eyes, and set his teeth hard as the dying beast licked his caressing hand in mute fidelity.

The great frame grew rigid as he watched, and slowly into the man's mind, for the first time in all his life, came doubt. Perhaps it was more of wonderment. It was not any suggestion of failing powers, imminent danger, or impending hardships; it was rather a mute questioning of things which he had always heretofore accepted, as he did the rising and sinking of the sun—things which began and ended with the day. His reasonings were slow and laborious; his mind creaked, as it were, with the effort—like an unused muscle, it responded with difficulty. Then, finally, he saw it all.

Long ago, when his mother died, she had warned him against the false new gods which the white man had brought from the big sea water, and in her old faith had turned her face to the wall of her teepee. She had been buried in a tree top, near a bend of the Albany River, where it turns north from Nipigon and runs through the spruce forests that slope down to Hudson Bay. But Tom had listened to the new story—more than that, he had hewed square timber for the Mission Church at Ignace; and now—retribution had come, at last. No sooner had the idea formulated itself, than it seized upon him; and then there rose to meet it—defiance. Grimly, he slackened the collar from the dead husky, and laid the empty traces across his own breast; savagely he thrust forward, and started the toboggan, and the diminished company stayed and stopped not till, once again, the darkness came.

That night the two surviving dogs eyed him furtively, when he flung them their food. They did not devour it ravenously, as was their custom; but crouched, with the fish under their paws, and followed, with shifting look, every move he made. He was too weary to care; but, had he watched them an hour later, the sight would have convinced him that there was an evil spirit abroad in those frosty woods.

Noiselessly, they approached his sleeping form, sniffing intently at everything in the camp. He lay, massive and motionless, wrapped in an immense rabbit-skin blanket, one fold of which was thrown over the bag that held his provisions; his giant body was slack, relaxed, and full of great weariness.

The dogs moved without a sound, till they stood over the sleeping man. The long hair rose in ridges along their spines, as they put their noses to his robe, and sniffed

at their unconscious master; for, whether it was the fight with the lynx, or that yellow body out on the ice, some new and strange thing had come into their blood; they had reverted to the primal dog, and no longer felt the burden of the collar or the trace—the labour of the trail had passed from them.

At first, the smell of man repelled them, but it was only for a moment; their lean shoulders swayed as their twitching noses ran over his outline, and then a new scent assailed them. It was the provision bag. Gently, and with infinite precaution, they pulled it. Tom stirred, but only stirred. The sack was trailed out over the snow, and the tough canvas soon gave way before those murderous teeth. In silence, and in hunger, they gorged; what they could not eat was destroyed, till, finally, with bulging sides, they lay down and slept, in utter repletion.

It was the sun on his face that woke Tom to a consciousness of what had happened. He felt for the bag, and, finding it not, looked at the dogs, and, on seeing them, raised his hand in anger. Now, this was a mistake; few dogs will wait for punishment, least of all a half-savage husky who expects it. He approached, they retreated; he stopped, they squatted on their haunches and eyed him suspiciously; he retreated, they did not move; he held out a fish, they were supremely indifferent. They had entered a new world, which was none of his; they suddenly found that they did not have to obey—and when man or beast reasons thus, it spells ruin. All his arts were exhausted and proved fruitless, and then Tom knew that an evil spirit—a Wendigo—was on his trail.

To push forward was his first instinct. Slowly, he rolled up the blanket, and laced it to the toboggan; and, as the sun topped the rim of the land, the unconquerable breed struck out across the ice, the traces tugging at his

shoulders. A few yards behind followed the enfranchised team, drunk with the intoxication of their new-found liberty. Never did he get within striking distance, but ever he was conscious of those soft, padding sounds; he felt as if they were always about to spring at his defenceless back, but all through the weary day they followed, elusive, mysteriously threatening.

He pulled up, faint with hunger, in mid-afternoon, and went into a thicket of cedar to set rabbit snares; but no sooner had he turned than the dogs were at the toboggan. A ripping of canvas caught his ear, and he rushed back in fury. They fled at his approach, and lay, flat on the snow, their heads between their paws; so Tom pulled up his load, built a fire beside it, and watched the huskies till morning. He had now one hundred miles to go; he had three hundred pounds to pull, and no dogs; he could not, dare not sleep; and he had no food, but—Anderson was waiting at Lac Seul.

Who can enter into those next days? Through the storms—and they were many—moved a gigantic figure, and, after it, crawled a long coffin-like shape; and behind the shape trotted two wolfish forms, with lean flanks and ravenous jaws. Across the crystalline plains plodded the grim procession, and, at night, the red eye of a campfire flung its flickering gleam on those same threatening forms, as they moved restlessly and noiselessly about, watching and waiting, waiting and watching. As his strength diminished with the miles, Tom began to see strange things, and hear curious and pleasant sounds. Then he got very sleepy; the snow was just the colour of the twenty-dollar blankets in the H. B. post; it was not cold now; he experienced a delicious languor; and people began to talk all around him; only they wouldn't answer when he shouted at them. Then the Wendigo

came, and told him to lie down and rest, and, as he was taking off his shoes, another spirit called out:

"Kago, kago—nebowah neepah panemah."

("Don't, don't! You will find rest by and by.")

At noon, on the eighth day after Tom left Ignace post, Peter Anderson looked across the drifts of Lac Seul, and shook his head. The horizon was blotted out in a blizzard that whipped the flakes into his face like needle points, and the distance dissolved in a whirling view. The bush had been cleared away around his buildings, and, in the bare space, a mighty wind swooped and shrieked. As he turned, the gale lifted for a moment, and, infinitely remote, something appeared to break the snow line at the end of a long white lane of dancing wreaths; then the storm closed down, and the vision was lost. Keenly, he strained through half-closed lids; once more something stirred, and, suddenly, the wind began to slacken. In the heart of it was staggering a giant shape, that swayed and tottered, but doggedly, almost unconsciously, moved on into the shelter of the land; behind trailed a formless mass, and, last of all, the apparitions of two lank, limping dogs.

Drunkenly and unseeingly, but with blind, indomitable purpose, the man won every agonizing step. His snowshoes were smashed to a shapeless tangle of wood and sinew; his face was gaunt, patched with grey blots of frost-bite; and, through his sunken cheeks, the high bones stood out like knuckles on a clenched fist. Ice was plastered on his cap, and lay fringed on brow and lids, but beneath them burned eyes that glowed with dull fires, quenchless and abysmal. By infinitesimal degrees he drew in, with not a wave of the hand, not a sign of recognition. Up the path, from shore to trading post, shouldered the titan figure, till it reached the door. At

the latch, stiff, frozen fingers were fumbling, as Anderson flung it open; and then a vast bulk darkened the threshold, swung in helpless hesitation for a fraction of time, and pitched, face foremost, on the rough pine floor.

A few hours later, he looked up from the pile of skins upon which Anderson had rolled him. His eyes wandered to the figure of the trader, who sat, serenely smoking, regarding with silent satisfaction a small mountain of provisions.

"All here, boss?"

"Ay, Tom, all here, and I'm muckle obliged to ye; are ye hungry, Tom? Will you hae a bit sup?"

"No eat for five days; pull toboggan. No dogs."

Anderson stiffened where he sat. "What's that? Haulin' three hunder' of grub, and ye were starving? Ye big copper-coloured fule!"

"No packer's grub, boss; Hudson's Bay grub!"

It was almost a groan, for Tom was far spent.

Involuntarily the quiet Scot lifted his hands in amazement, and then hurried into his kitchen, murmuring, as he disappeared: "Man, man, it's with the likes of ye that the Hudson's Bay keeps its word."

—*Alan Sullivan*

From "Oul-i-but and Other Stories"
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PATRIOTISM AND SPORT

I notice that some papers, especially papers that call themselves patriotic, have fallen into quite a panic over the fact that we have been twice beaten in the world of sport, that a Frenchman has beaten us at golf, and that Belgians have beaten us at rowing. I suppose that the incidents are important to any people who ever believed in the self-satisfied English legend on this subject. I suppose that there are men who vaguely believe that we could never be beaten by a Frenchman, despite the fact that we have often been beaten by Frenchmen, and once by a Frenchwoman. In the old pictures in *Punch* you will find a recurring piece of satire. The English caricaturists always assumed that a Frenchman could not ride to hounds or enjoy English hunting. It did not seem to occur to them that all the people who founded English hunting were Frenchmen. All the kings and nobles who originally rode to hounds spoke French Large numbers of those Englishmen who still ride to hounds have French names. I suppose that the thing is important to any one who is ignorant of such evident matters as these. I suppose that if a man has ever believed that we English have some sacred and separate right to be athletic, such reverses do appear quite enormous and shocking. They feel as if, while the proper sun was rising in the east, some other and unexpected sun had begun to rise in the north-north-west by north. For the benefit, the moral and intellectual benefit of such people, it may be worth while to point out that the Anglo-Saxon has in these cases been defeated precisely by those

competitors whom he has always regarded as being out of the running; by Latins, and by Latins of the most easy and unstrenuous type; not only by Frenchmen, but by Belgians. All this, I say, is worth telling to any intelligent person who believes in the haughty theory of Anglo-Saxon superiority. But, then, no intelligent person does believe in the haughty theory of Anglo-Saxon superiority. No quite genuine Englishman ever did believe in it. And the genuine Englishman these defeats will in no respect dismay.

The genuine English patriot will know that the strength of England has never depended upon any of these things; that the glory of England has never had anything to do with them, except in the opinion of a large section of the rich and a loose section of the poor which copies the idleness of the rich. These people will, of course, think too much of our failure, just as they thought too much of our success. The typical Jingoes who have admired their countrymen too much for being conquerors will, doubtless, despise their countrymen too much for being conquered. But the Englishman with any feeling for England will know that athletic failures do not prove that England is weak, any more than athletic successes proved that England was strong. The truth is that athletics, like all other things, especially modern, are insanely individualistic. The Englishmen who win sporting prizes are exceptional among Englishmen, for the simple reason that they are exceptional even among men. English athletes represent England just about as much as Mr. Barnum's freaks represent America. There are so few of such people in the whole world that it is almost a toss-up whether they are found in this or that country.

If any one wants a simple proof of this, it is easy to find. When the great English athletes are not exceptional Englishmen they are generally not Englishmen at all. Nay, they are often representative of races of which the average tone is specially incompatible with athletics. For instance, the English are supposed to rule the natives of India in virtue of their superior hardiness, superior activity, superior health of body and mind. The Hindus are supposed to be our subjects because they are less fond of action, less fond of openness and the open air. In a word, less fond of cricket. And, substantially, this is probably true, that the Indians are less fond of cricket. All the same, if you ask among Englishmen for the very best cricket-player, you will find that he is an Indian. Or, to take another case: it is, broadly speaking, true that the Jews are, as a race, pacific, intellectual, indifferent to war, like the Indians, or, perhaps, contemptuous of war, like the Chinese: nevertheless, of the very good prize-fighters, one or two have been Jews.

This is one of the strongest instances of the particular kind of evil that arises from our English form of the worship of athletics. It concentrates too much upon the success of individuals. It began, quite naturally and rightly, with wanting England to win. The second stage was that it wanted some Englishmen to win. The third stage was (in the ecstasy and agony of some special competition) that it wanted one particular Englishman to win. And the fourth stage was that when he had won, it discovered that he was not even an Englishman.

This is one of the points, I think, on which something might really be said for Lord Roberts and his rather vague ideas which vary between rifle clubs and conscription. Whatever may be the advantages or disadvantages

otherwise of the idea, it is at least an idea of procuring equality and a sort of average in the athletic capacity of the people; it might conceivably act as a corrective to our mere tendency to see ourselves in certain exceptional athletes. As it is, there are millions of Englishmen who really think that they are a muscular race because C. B. Fry is an Englishman. And there are many of them who think vaguely that athletics must belong to England because Ranjitsinhji is an Indian.

But the real historic strength of England, physical and moral, has never had anything to do with this athletic specialism; it has been rather hindered by it. Somebody said that the Battle of Waterloo was won on Eton playing-fields. It was a particularly unfortunate remark, for the English contribution to the victory of Waterloo depended very much more than is common in victories upon the steadiness of the rank and file in an almost desperate situation. The Battle of Waterloo was won by the stubbornness of the common soldier—that is to say, it was won by the man who had never been to Eton. It was absurd to say that Waterloo was won on Eton cricket-fields. But it might have been fairly said that Waterloo was won on the village green, where clumsy boys played a very clumsy cricket. In a word, it was the average of the nation that was strong, and athletic glories do not indicate much about the average of a nation. Waterloo was not won by good cricket-players. But Waterloo was won by bad cricket-players, by a mass of men who had some minimum of athletic instincts and habits. It is a good sign in a nation when such things are done badly. It shows that all the people are doing them. And it is a bad sign in a nation when such things are done very well, for it shows that only a

few experts and eccentrics are doing them, and that the nation is merely looking on. Suppose that whenever we heard of walking in England it always meant walking forty-five miles a day without fatigue. We should be perfectly certain that only a few men were walking at all, and that all the other British subjects were being wheeled about in bath-chairs. But if when we hear of walking it means slow walking, painful walking, and frequent fatigue, then we know that the mass of the nation still is walking. We know that England is still literally on its feet.

The difficulty is therefore that the actual raising of the standard of athletics has probably been bad for national athleticism. Instead of the tournament being a healthy *mêlée* into which any ordinary man would rush and take his chance, it has become a fenced and guarded tilting-yard for the collision of particular champions against whom no ordinary man would pit himself or even be permitted to pit himself. If Waterloo was won on Eton cricket-fields it was because Eton cricket was probably much more careless then than it is now. As long as the game was a game, everybody wanted to join in it. When it becomes an art, every one wants to look at it. When it was frivolous it may have won Waterloo: when it was serious and efficient it lost Magersfontein.

In the Waterloo period there was a general rough-and-tumble athleticism among average Englishmen. It cannot be re-created by cricket, or by conscription, or by any artificial means. It was a thing of the soul. It came out of laughter, religion, and the spirit of the place. But it was like the modern French duel in this—that it might happen to anybody. If I were a French

journalist it might really happen that Monsieur Clemenceau might challenge me to meet him with pistols. But I do not think that it is at all likely that Mr. C. B. Fry will ever challenge me to meet him with cricket-bats.

—*G. K. Chesterton*

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SOME HINTS ON READING

(1911)

It has been often said that books do for us to-day what universities did in earlier ages. The knowledge that could five centuries ago have been obtained only from the lips of a teacher, can now be gathered from the printed page. Nevertheless, since it is only the most active and most diligent and most discerning minds that can dispense with the help and guidance of teachers to show them what to read and how to read, universities and colleges are scarcely less useful if not quite so indispensable to-day as they were before the invention of printing. It is, therefore, not unfitting that in your college I should be asked to talk to you about books, the way to choose them, and the way to draw most profit from them. The very abundance of books in our days—a stupefying and terrifying abundance—has made it more important to know how to choose promptly and judiciously among them if one is not to spend as much time in the mere choice as in the use. Here you have the help of your professors. But here you are only beginning the process of education which will go on during the rest of your life. By far the largest part of that process will, after you have left college, consist in your independent reading, so the sooner you form habits of choice and methods of use, the better.

The first piece of advice I will venture to give you is this: Read only the best books. There are plenty of

them, far more than you will ever find time to read, and when they are to be had it is a pity to waste time on any others.

You may ask what I mean by the Best books. Passing by for the moment those which in each of the great world-languages we call its classics, for to these we shall return presently, I mean by the Best those from which you receive most, and can carry most away, in the form either of knowledge or of stimulation. When you want to learn something about a subject, do not fall upon the first book which you have heard named or which professes by its title to deal with that subject. Consult your teacher, or any well-read friend, or the librarian of the nearest public library. (One of the greatest services public libraries render is that they provide librarians usually competent, and I believe always willing, to advise those who apply to them.) Be content with nothing less than the very best you can get. Time will be saved in the end.

There is no waste more pitiable than that so often seen when some zealous student has, for want of guidance, spent weeks or months of toil in trying to obtain from a second- or third-rate book what he might have found sooner and better in a first-rate one. So try to read only what is good. And by "good" you will not suppose me to mean what used to be called "improving books," books written in a sort of Sunday School spirit for the moral benefit of the reader. A book may be excellent in its ethical tone, and full of solid information, and yet be unprofitable, that is to say, dull, heavy, uninspiring, wearisome. Contrariwise, a book is good when it is bright and fresh, when it rouses and enlivens the mind, when it provides materials on which the mind can pleasurably work, when it leaves the reader not only

knowing more but better able to use the knowledge he has received from it.

Seventy years ago people, or at least those who used then to be called the preceptors of youth, talked as if there lay a certain virtue in dry books, or at any rate a moral merit in the process of plodding through them. It was a dismal mistake, which inflicted upon youth many a dreary hour. The dull book is not better than the lively book. Other things being equal, it is worse, because it requires more expenditure of effort to master such of its contents as are worth remembering. If the edge of the tool is blunt, one must put forth more strength, and as there is never too much strength, none of it should be wasted. It may be asked, "But is not the mental discipline wholesome?" Yes, effort crowned with victory is a fine thing, but since there is plenty of such discipline to be had from the better books why go to the worse books for it?

Sometimes it happens that what you want to learn cannot be had except from dry or even from dull treatises. Dryness and dulness are not the same thing, for the former quality may be due to the nature of the subject, but the latter is the fault of the author. Well, if there is no other book to be found, you must make the best of the dry and even of the dull. But first make quite sure that there are none better to be had, for though in many a subject the really satisfactory book has not yet been written, still in most subjects there is a large choice between the better and the worse.

To you undergraduates life now seems a long vista with infinite possibilities. But, if you love learning, you will soon find that life is altogether too short for reading half the good books from which you would like to cull knowledge. Let not an hour of it be wasted

on third-rate or second-rate stuff if first-rate stuff can be had. Goethe once said of some one he knew, "He is a dull man. If he were a book, I would not read him." When you find that a book is poor, and does not give you even the bare facts you are in search of, waste no more time upon it.

The immensity of the field of reading suggests another question. Ought a man to read widely, trying to keep abreast of the progress of knowledge and thought in the world at large, or is it better that he should confine himself to a very few subjects, and to proceed not discursively but upon some regular system?

Each alternative has its advantages, but considering how rapidly knowledge is extending itself in all directions, and how every branch of it is becoming specialized, we must recognize that the range of attainment possible three or even two centuries ago is now unattainable even by the most powerful and most industrious minds. To-day the choice lies between superficiality in a larger, and some approach to thoroughness in a smaller, number of topics. Between these alternatives there can be no doubt as to your choice. Every man ought to be thorough in at least one thing, ought to know what exactness and accuracy mean, ought to be capable by his mastery of some one topic of having an opinion that is genuinely his own. So my advice to you would be to direct your reading chiefly to a few subjects, in one at least of which you may hope to make yourself proficient, and as regards other subjects, to be content with doing what you can to follow the general march of knowledge. You will find it hard—indeed impossible—to follow that march in the physical sciences, unless you start with some special knowledge of one or more of them. Many of the branches into which they have been diverging are now so

specialized that the ordinary reader can hardly comprehend the technical terms which modern treatises employ. But as respects travel and history and biography, and similarly as respects economics, the so-called "sociological subjects," art, and literary criticism, it is possible for a man who husbands his time and spends little of it on newspapers or magazines, to find leisure for the really striking books that are published on some of these topics which lie outside his special tastes. Do not, however, attempt to cover even the striking books on all of such topics. You will only dissipate your forces. Now and then a book appears which everybody ought to read, no matter how far it lies out of his range of study. It may be a brilliant poem. It may be a treatise throwing new light on some current question of home or foreign politics, about which every citizen, because he is a citizen, ought to try to have an opinion. It may be the record of some startling discovery in the realms of archæology, for instance, or in some branch of natural science. But such books are rare; and in particular the epoch-making scientific discoveries are seldom known at the time when the world first hears of them to be really epoch-making.

Two questions may, however, have presented themselves to you. One is this: Are there not some indispensable books which everyone is bound to read on pain of being deemed to be not an educated man? Certainly there are. Every language has its classics which those who speak the language ought to have read as part of a liberal education. In our own tongue we have, say, a score of great authors—it would be easy to add another dozen, but I wish to be moderate and put the number as low as possible—of whose works every one of us is bound to have read enough to enable him to appreciate

the author's peculiar quality. These, of course, you must read, though not necessarily all or nearly all they have written. Spenser, for instance, is an English classic, but even so voracious a reader as Macaulay admitted that few could be expected to persevere to the end of the *Faery Queene*. Even smaller is the percentage of Dryden's works which a man may feel bound to read. Do not look for an opinion as to the percentage in the case of Robert Browning. The sooner you begin to read those who belong to this score, the better, for most of them are poets, and youth is the season in which to learn to love poetry. If you do not care for it then, you will hardly do so later.

The other question is, What about fiction? I can just recall an austere time, more than sixty years ago, when in Britain not a few moralists and educators were disposed to ban novel-reading altogether to young people and to treat it even among their elders as an indulgence almost as dangerous as the use of cards, dice, and tobacco. Exceptions, however, were made even by the sternest of these authorities. I recollect that one of them gave his imprimatur to two stories by an estimable Scottish authoress—now long forgotten—named Miss Brunton. These tales were entitled *Discipline* and *Self-Control*, and a perusal of them was well fitted to discourage the young reader from indulging any further his taste for imaginative literature. Permitted fiction being scanty, I did attack *Self-Control*, and just got through it, but *Discipline* was too much for me. Fiction is far more read now; being abundant and cheaper, since it comes in the form of magazines as well as in books. But we have no Dickens, no Thackeray, no Hawthorne, no George Eliot.

Need anything more be said about fiction than that

we should deal with it just as we should with other kinds of literature? Read the best; that is to say, read that from which you can carry away something that enlarges the range of your knowledge and sets your mind working. A good story, be it an historical romance or a picture of contemporary social conditions, gives something that is worth remembering. It may be a striking type of character, or a view of life and the influences that mould life, presented in a dramatic form. Or perhaps the tale portrays the aspects of society and manners in some other country, or is made a vehicle for an analysis of the heart and for reflections that illuminate some of the dark corners of human nature. Whichever of them it be that a powerful piece of fiction gives, the result is something more than mere transient amusement. Knowledge is increased. Thought is set in motion. New images rise before us. It is an enrichment of the mind to have erected within it a gallery of characters, the creation of imaginative minds, characters who become as real to us as the famous characters of history, to some of us possibly more real. In them we see the universal traits of human nature and learn to know ourselves and those around us better, we comprehend the common temptations and aspirations, the mixture of motives, the way in which Fortune plays with men. We share the possession of this gallery with other educated men. It is a part of the common stock of the world's wealth.

The danger of becoming so fond of fiction as to care for no other sort of reading, a malady from which some men and more women are said to suffer, will threaten nobody who has formed the habit of reading the kind of fiction I am trying to describe, because he will enjoy no other kind. A boy or girl can usually read any

sort of tale be it better or worse written. The story is enough for him. As he grows older and has read more and more of the best writers, his taste becomes more cultivated and exacting. While faults repel him more, merits attract him more, because he has become more capable of appreciation. At last a poor quality of fiction which is merely commonplace, handling threadbare themes in a hackneyed way, the sort of fiction into which no inventive or reflective thought has gone, comes to bore him. He can no longer read it, because it is too dull or too vapid.

Prose fiction, in its higher forms, cultivates the imagination almost as well as history does, but poetry does this better than either. The pleasures of the imagination are among the highest we can enjoy. Unless, therefore, any one of you is so unlucky as to find no delight in poetry, it will always form a part of your reading. Not much of the highest order has been appearing in these later days in any country, but there is such an abundance from former days that you will never want for plenty to read, and no modern language possesses so much poetry of first-rate merit as does our own.

—*James Bryce*

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JUKE JUDKINS

I am the only son of a considerable brazier in Birmingham, who, dying in 1803, left me successor to the business, with no other encumbrance than a sort of rent-charge, which I am enjoined to pay out of it, of ninety-three pounds sterling *per annum*, to his widow, my mother: and which the improving state of the concern, I bless God, has hitherto enabled me to discharge with punctuality. (I say, I am enjoined to pay the said sum, but not strictly obligated: that is to say, as the will is worded, I believe the law would relieve me from the payment of it; but the wishes of a dying parent should in some sort have the effect of law.) So that, though the annual profits of my business, on an average of the last three or four years, would appear to an indifferent observer, who should inspect my shop-books, to amount to the sum of one thousand three hundred and three pounds, odd shillings, the real proceeds in that time have fallen short of that sum to the amount of the aforesaid payment of ninety-three pounds sterling annually.

I was always my father's favourite. He took a delight, to the very last, in recounting the little sagacious tricks and innocent artifices of my childhood. One manifestation thereof I never heard him repeat without tears of joy trickling down his cheeks. It seems that when I quitted the parental roof (Aug. 27, 1788), being then six years and not quite a month old, to proceed to the Free School at Warwick, where my father was a sort of trustee, my mother—as mothers are usually provident on these occasions—had stuffed the pockets of the coach, which

was to convey me and six more children of my own growth that were going to be entered along with me at the same seminary, with a prodigious quantity of gingerbread, which I remember my father said was more than was needed: and so indeed it was; for, if I had been to eat it all myself, it would have got stale and mouldy before it had been half spent. The consideration whereof set me upon my contrivances how I might secure to myself as much of the gingerbread as would keep good for the next two or three days, yet none of the rest in manner be wasted. I had a little pair of pocket compasses, which I usually carried about me for the purpose of making draughts and measurements, at which I was always very ingenious, of the various engines and mechanical inventions in which such a town as Birmingham abounded. By means of these, and a small penknife which my father had given me, I cut out the one-half of the cake, calculating that the remainder would reasonably serve my turn; and subdividing it into many little slices, which were curious to see for the neatness and niceness of their proportion, I sold it out in so many pennyworths to my young companions as served us all the way to Warwick, which is a distance of some twenty miles from this town: and very merry, I assure you, we made ourselves with it, feasting all the way. By this honest stratagem I put double the prime cost of the gingerbread into my purse, and secured as much as I thought would keep good and moist for my next two or three days' eating. When I told this to my parents on their first visit to me at Warwick, my father (good man) patted me on the cheek, and stroked my head, and seemed as if he could never make enough of me; but my mother unaccountably burst into tears, and said, "it was a very niggardly action," or some such expres-

sion, and that "she would rather it would please God to take me"—meaning (God help me!) that I should die—"than that she should live to see me grow up *a mean man*": which shows the difference of parent from parent, and how some mothers are more harsh and intolerant to their children than some fathers; when we might expect quite the contrary. My father, however, loaded me with presents from that time, which made me the envy of my school-fellows. As I felt this growing disposition in them, I naturally sought to avert it by all the means in my power: and from that time I used to eat my little packages of fruit, and other nice things, in a corner, so privately that I was never found out. Once, I remember, I had a huge apple sent me, of that sort which they call *cats'-heads*. I concealed this all day under my pillow; and at night, but not before I had ascertained that my bed-fellow was sound asleep—which I did by pinching him rather smartly two or three times, which he seemed to perceive no more than a dead person, though once or twice he made a motion as if he would turn, which frightened me—I say, when I had made all sure, I fell to work upon my apple; and, though it was as big as an ordinary man's two fists, I made shift to get through it before it was time to get up. And a more delicious feast I never made; thinking all night what a good parent I had (I mean my father) to send me so many nice things, when the poor lad that lay by me had no parent or friend in the world to send him anything nice; and thinking of his desolate condition, I munched and munched as silently as I could, that I might not set him a-longing if he overheard me. And yet, for all this considerateness and attention to other people's feelings, I was never much of a favourite with my school-fellows; which I have often wondered at, seeing that I never defrauded any

one of them of the value of a halfpenny, or told stories of them to their master, as some little lying boys would do, but was ready to do any of them all the services in my power, that were consistent with my own well-doing. I think nobody can be expected to go farther than that. But I am detaining my reader too long in recording my juvenile days. It is time I should go forward to a season when it became natural that I should have some thoughts of marrying, and, as they say, settling in the world. Nevertheless, my reflections on what I may call the boyish period of my life may have their use to some readers. It is pleasant to trace the man in the boy; to observe shoots of generosity in those young years; and to watch the progress of liberal sentiments, and what I may call a genteel way of thinking, which is discernible in some children at a very early age, and usually lays the foundation of all that is praiseworthy in the manly character afterwards.

With the warmest inclinations towards that way of life, and a serious conviction of its superior advantages over a single one, it has been the strange infelicity of my lot never to have entered into the respectable estate of matrimony. Yet I was once very near it. I courted a young woman in my twenty-seventh year; for so early I began to feel symptoms of the tender passion! She was well to do in the world, as they call it; but yet not such a fortune, as, all things considered, perhaps I might have pretended to. It was not my own choice altogether; but my mother very strongly pressed me to it. She was always putting it to me, that I had "comings-in sufficient"—that I "need not stand upon a portion"; though the young woman, to do her justice, had considerable expectations, which yet did not quite come up to my mark, as I told you before. My mother had this saying

always in her mouth, that I had "money enough"; that it was time I enlarged my housekeeping, and to show a spirit befitting my circumstances. In short, what with her importunities, and my own desires *in part* co-operating—for, as I said, I was not yet quite twenty-seven, —a time when the youthful feelings may be pardoned if they show a little impetuosity—I resolved, I say, upon all these considerations, to set about the business of courting in right earnest. I was a young man then; and having a spice of romance in my character (as the reader has doubtless observed long ago), such as that sex is apt to be taken with, I had reason in no long time to think my addresses were anything but disagreeable. Certainly the happiest part of a young man's life is the time when he is going a-courting. All the generous impulses are then awake, and he feels a double existence in participating his hopes and wishes with another being. Return yet again for a brief moment, ye visionary views—transient enchantments! ye moonlight rambles with Cleora in the Silent Walk at Vauxhall, (N.B.—About a mile from Birmingham, and resembling the gardens of that name near London, only that the price of admission is lower,) when the nightingale has suspended her notes in June to listen to our loving discourses, while the moon was overhead! (for we generally used to take our tea at Cleora's mother's before we set out, not so much to save expenses as to avoid the publicity of a repast in the gardens—coming in much about the time of half-price, as they call it,)—ye soft inter-communions of soul, when exchanging mutual vows, we prattled of coming felicities! The loving disputes we have had under those trees, when this house (planning our future settlement) was rejected, because, though cheap, it was dull; and the other house was given up, because, though

agreeably situated, it was too high-rented!—one was too much in the heart of the town, another was too far from business. These minutiæ will seem impertinent to the aged and the prudent. I write them only to the young. Young lovers, and passionate as being young (such were Cleora and I then), alone can understand me. After some weeks wasted, as I may now call it, in this sort of amorous colloquy, we at length fixed upon the house in the High Street, No. 203, just vacated by the death of Mr. Hutton of this town, for our future residence. I had all the time lived in lodgings (only renting a shop for business), to be near my mother—near, I say: not in the same house; for that would have been to introduce confusion in our housekeeping, which it was desirable to keep separate Oh the loving wrangles, the endearing differences, I had with Cleora, before we could quite make up our minds to the house that was to receive us!—I pretending, for argument's sake, the rent was too high, and she insisting that the taxes were moderate in proportion; and love at last reconciling us in the same choice. I think at that time, moderately speaking, she might have had anything out of me for asking. I do not, nor shall ever, regret that my character at that time was marked with a tinge of prodigality. Age comes fast enough upon us, and, in its good time, will prune away all that is inconvenient in these excesses. Perhaps it is right that it should do so. Matters, as I said, were ripening to a conclusion between us, only the house was yet not absolutely taken—some necessary arrangements, which the ardour of my youthful impetuosity could hardly brook at that time (love and youth will be precipitate)—some preliminary arrangements, I say, with the landlord, respecting fixtures, very necessary things to be considered in a young man about to settle in the world,

though not very accordant with the impatient state of my then passions—some obstacles about the valuation of the fixtures—had hitherto precluded (and I shall always think providentially) my final closes with his offer; when one of those accidents, which unimportant in themselves, often rise to give a turn of the most serious intentions of our life, intervened, and put an end at once to my projects of wiving and of housekeeping.

I was never much given to theatrical entertainments; that is, at no time of my life was I ever what they call a regular play-goer: but on some occasion of a benefit-night, which was expected to be very productive, and indeed turned out so, Cleora expressing a desire to be present, I could do no less than offer, as I did very willingly, to squire her and her mother to the pit. At that time it was not customary in our town for tradesfolk, except some of the very topping ones, to sit, as they now do, in the boxes. At the time appointed I waited upon the ladies, who had brought with them a young man, a distant relation, whom it seems they had invited to be of the party. This a little disconcerted me, as I had about me barely silver enough to pay for our three selves at the door, and did not at first know that their relation had proposed paying for himself. However, to do the young man justice, he not only paid for himself, but for the old lady besides; leaving me only to pay for two, as it were. In our passage to the theatre the notice of Cleora was attracted to some orange wenches that stood about the doors vending their commodities. She was leaning on my arm; and I could feel her every now and then giving me a nudge, as it is called, which I afterwards discovered were hints that I should buy some oranges. It seems it is a custom in Birmingham, and perhaps in other places, when a gentleman treats ladies

to the play—especially when a full night is expected, and that the house will be inconveniently warm—to provide them with this kind of fruit, oranges being esteemed for their cooling property. But how could I guess at that, never having treated ladies to a play before, and being, as I said, quite a novice at entertainments of this kind? At last she spoke plain out, and begged that I would buy some of "those oranges," pointing to a particular barrow. But, when I came to examine the fruit, I did not think the quality of it was answerable to the price. In this way I handled several baskets of them; but something in them all displeased me. Some had thin rinds, and some were plainly over-ripe, which is as great a fault as not being ripe enough; and I could not (what they call) make a bargain. While I stood haggling with the woman, secretly determining to put off my purchase till I should get within the theatre, where I expected we should have better choice, the young man, the cousin (who, it seems, had left us without my missing him), came running to us with his pockets stuffed out with oranges, inside and out, as they say. It seems, not liking the look of the barrow-fruit any more than myself, he had slipped away to an eminent fruiterer's, about three doors distant, which I never had the sense to think of, and had laid out a matter of two shillings in some of the best St. Michael's, I think, I ever tasted. What a little hinge, as I said before, the most important affairs in life may turn upon! The mere inadvertence to the fact that there was an eminent fruiterer's within three doors of us, though we had just passed it without the thought once occurring to me, which he had taken advantage of, lost me the affection of my Cleora. From that time she visibly cooled towards me; and her partiality was as visibly transferred to this cousin. I was long unable

to account for this change in her behaviour; when one day, accidentally discoursing of oranges to my mother, alone, she let drop a sort of reproach to me as if I had offended Cleora by my *nearness*, as she called it, that evening. Even now, when Cleora has been wedded some years to that same officious relation, as I may call him, I can hardly be persuaded that such a trifle could have been the motive to her inconstancy; for could she suppose that I would sacrifice my dearest hopes in her to the paltry sum of two shillings, when I was going to treat her to the play, and her mother too (an expense of more than four times that amount), if the young man had not interfered to pay for the latter, as I mentioned? But the caprices of the sex are past finding out: and I begin to think my mother was in the right; for doubtless women know women better than we can pretend to know them.

—*Charles Lamb*

ON A PAINTED FACE

The other day I met in the street a young lady who, but yesterday, seemed to me a young girl. She had in the interval taken that sudden leap from youth tc maturity which is always so wonderful and perplexing. When I had seen her last there would have been no impropriety in giving her a kiss in the street. Now I should as little have thought of offering to kiss her as of whistling to the Archbishop of Canterbury if I had seen that dignitary passing on the other side of the road. She had taken wing and flown from the nest. She was no longer a child: she was a personage. I found myself trying (a little clumsily) to adapt my conversation to her new status, and when I left her I raised my hat a trifle more elaborately than is my custom.

But the thing that struck me most about her, and the thing that has set me writing about her, was this: I noticed that her face was painted and powdered. Now if there is one thing I abominate above all others it is a painted face. On the stage, of course, it is right and proper. The stage is a world of make-believe, and it is the business of the lady of sixty to give you the impression that she is a sweet young thing of seventeen. There is no affectation in this. It is her vocation to be young, and she follows it as willingly or unwillingly as you or I follow our respective callings. At the moment, for example, I would do anything to escape writing this article, for the sun is shining in the bluest of April skies and the bees are foraging in the orchard, and everything calls me outside to the woods and hills. But I must bake my tale of bricks first with as much pretence of enjoying the job as possible. And in the same way, and

perhaps sometimes with the same distaste, the Juliet of middle age puts on the bloom of the Juliet of seventeen.

But that any one, not compelled to do it for a living, should paint the face or dye the hair is to me unintelligible. It is like attempting to pass off a counterfeit coin. It is either a confession that one is so ashamed of one's face that one dare not let it be seen in public, or it is an attempt to deceive the world into accepting you as something other than you are. It has the same effect on the observer that those sham oak beams and uprights that are so popular on the front of suburban houses have. They are not real beams or uprights. They do not support anything, or fill any useful function. They are only a thin veneer of oak stuck on to pretend that they are the real thing. They are a detestable pretence, and I would rather live in a hovel than in a house tricked out with such vulgar deceits that do not deceive.

And in the same way the paint on the face and the dye on the hair never really achieve their object. If they did they would not cease to be a sham, but at least they would not be a transparent sham. There are, of course, degrees of failure. Mrs. Gamp's curls were so obviously false that they could not be said to be intended to deceive. On the other hand, the great lady who employs the most scientific face-makers in order to defeat the encroachments of Time does very nearly succeed. But her failure is really more tragic than that of Mrs. Gamp. How tragic I realized one day when I was introduced to a distinguished "society" woman, whose youthful beauty was popularly supposed to have survived to old age. At a distance she did indeed seem to be a miracle of girlish loveliness. But when I came close to her and saw the old, bleared eyes in the midst of that beautifully enamelled face, the shock had in it something akin to horror. It was as though Death

himself was peeping out triumphantly through the painted mask. And in that moment I seemed to see all the pitiful years of struggle that this unhappy woman had devoted to the pretence of never growing older. Her pink and white cheeks were not a thing of beauty. They were only a grim jest on herself, on her ambitions, her ideals, her poor little soul.

Why should we be so much afraid of wrinkles and grey hairs? In their place they can be as beautiful as the freshest glow on the face of youth. There is a beauty of the sunrise and a beauty of the sunset. And of the two the beauty of the sunset is the deeper and more spiritual. There are some faces that seem to grow in loveliness as the snows fall around them, and the acid of Time bites the gracious lines deeper. The dimple has become a crease, but it is none the less beautiful, for in that crease is the epic of a lifetime. To smooth out the crease, to cover it with the false hue of youth, is to turn the epic into a satire.

And if the painted face of age is horrible the painted face of youth is disgusting. It is artistically bad and spiritually worse. It is the mark of a debased taste and a shallow mind. It is like painting the lily or adding a perfume to the violet, and has on one the unpleasant effect that is made by the heavy odours in which the same type of person drenches herself, so that to pass her is like passing through a sickly fog. These things are the symptom of a diseased mind—a mind that has lost the healthy love of truth and nature, and has taken refuge in falsities and shams. The paint on the face does not stop at the cheeks. It stains the soul.

—*Alpha of the Plough* (*A. G. Gardiner*)

From "Pebbles on the Shore"
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London and Toronto

THE CAWING OF ROOKS

The cawing of rooks is one of the characteristic sounds of Spring, and it is one of good cheer. There is vigour in it and exultation in the victory of life over materials, for the building of big nests on the delicate branches of the swaying tree-tops is a real achievement. The cawing is the voice of strong-willed mates and of jealous parents. It is more than the babel of a crowd; it is the vociferation of big-brained creatures that have got past simple gregariousness, and live in what is more than the adumbration of a society. We like it, too, because it is one of the earliest awakening voices of Spring. As the child's poem says:

> Buds of green on branch and stem
> Glisten in the morning sun,
> For the crows have wakened them,
> And they open one by one.

We have been listening these days to the cawing of the rooks, and they certainly have a considerable vocabulary. There is probably no *language* in the strict sense—man has a monopoly of that; but the rooks have *words* just as dogs have, definite uttered sounds which have definite meanings. Words are uttered when we move suddenly beneath the trees, and other words are uttered when a bird intrudes on the precincts of a neighbour's nest; there is a word when the rook sinks down upon the nest, and another word when it flies clear of the rookery and makes for the fields. What danger-signals, what scoldings, what satisfaction, what exultation, what reproaches, what encouragements do we not hear? There is no doubt that the members of the crow family

have fine brains and a notable power of vocalization, which training, as in jackdaws and ravens, may develop to a remarkable degree; the finely innervated musculature of the voice-box (or syrinx) is more highly differentiated than in the master-songsters, such as blackbird and mavis. Experts tell us that the rook has between thirty and forty notes, which can be intricately combined. This may be best appreciated at the roosting-place after the busy breeding season is over and summer has come. "A marvellous medley," said Mr. Edmond Selous in his delightful *Bird Watchings*, "a wonderful hoarse harmony. Here are shoutings of triumph, chatterings of joy, deep trills of contentment, hoarse yells of derision, deep guttural indignations, moanings, groanings, tauntings, remonstrances, clicks, squeaks, sobs, cachinnations, and the whole a most musical murmur. Loud, but a murmur, a wild, noisy, clamorous murmur; but sinking now, softening—a lullaby.

I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder."

We shall appreciate the cawing of the rooks better if we inquire into the story of "the black republic in the elms." It is in February that the rooks' Spring begins, for then there is the courting. This takes place, not once in a lifetime, but every Spring, between mates who have been married for years. For they seem to be monogamous. The cock-bird struts and bows before the hen, and spreads his wings and tail. Moreover, as Gilbert White observed long ago, "rooks, in the breeding season, attempt sometimes, in the gaiety of their hearts, to sing, but with no great success." It should be noted, however, that the singing, the bowing, and the tail-spreading are not restricted to the time of courtship, but may be indulged in at any time of excitement or jollity. Very

interesting is Mr. F. B. Kirkman's note that the male bird sometimes brings a tit-bit to his desired mate, which she accepts "with quivering wings and stifled thanks." This offering of love-gifts occurs sporadically among animals. It is part of the ritual which aims at working up the female's excitement, and in the case of the rook and many other birds it finds a second expression, probably the primary one, when the male brings food to the nesting female and to the nestlings.

The courtship is followed, early in March, by the preparation of the nest. An old nest may be used over again after a thorough spring-cleaning, or a fresh one may be built. As every one knows, there is a good deal of vigorous quarrelling over the possession of old nests or of new sites; and up to a certain point there is stealing of materials. This necessitates one bird mounting guard while the mate collects, the division of labour alternating. Very remarkable is the frequent destruction of nests that are built on trees in the outskirts of the main colony, as if the sense of the community insisted on maintaining a close gregariousness. One tree may have to carry as many as thirty nests, and it is usual to see about a dozen. The nest is built of both dry and supple twigs, with the addition of earth and clay, and the inside of the cup is made soft with grass and leaves, hair and wool. Among the favourite trees are ash, elm, beech, Scots fir, and sycamore; and it has been observed over and over again that trees which betray insecurity are abandoned by the rooks even after the nests have been built. A forsaken tree is doomed, and this may be one of the facts that have given basis to some of the superstitions about rooks.

The eggs are interesting biologically because of their great variability in colouring—that is to say, in relatively safe nesting-places, where inconspicuousness or the oppo-

site is of little moment, natural selection has imposed no limits on variation. After the laying, towards the end of March, the mother bird sits close, the male occasionally relieving her. There is no more returning at night to the communal roosting-place, which is usually quite apart from the rookery; all the rooks keep vigil by their nests. "Relatively safe," we said, for raids by carrion-crows and other non-social members of the family Corvidæ are common, and are sometimes so successful, in spite of the strength of unity, that the rookery is deserted. It looks as if the rooks were not very good fighters, though they do to herons what carrion-crows, hoodies, and ravens do to them. Perhaps, for all we know, it was some weakness or softness of character that led rooks to become the most social of European birds, for apart from the jackdaws, which are so often their satellites, the other members of the race to which they belong are solitaries and individualists.

When the three to five eggs hatch, the parents have to be busier than ever, for the appetite of the young birds is large. Big mouthfuls of grubs and wireworms and the like are brought in, making a pouch-like bulging below the tongue; and at this time the rooks do so much in the farmer's interest that we should not be too hard on them for their depredations at other times. In his splendid *British Bird Book* Mr. Kirkman quotes from Mr. Phil Robinson the interesting observation that, to begin with, the male bird gives the food only to the female, who passes it on "doubly peptonized to the babies," and that later on both parents feed the young. "But it is most extraordinary to notice how the young accept it from the father without any demonstration, sometimes in complete silence, while every time the mother approaches they lift up their voices in a chorus of

jubilation." One would like to hear more of this matter. Every one knows that the rook differs from the crow in habit and colour, in the loss (after the first year) of the feathers round the back of the beak, and so on, but it is instructive, as an illustration of the way in which specificity penetrates through and through a creature, that while the inside of the mouth is always pale flesh-colour in the young of the carrion-crow, it is first dark flesh-colour and then slaty in the rook.

In many parts of the country it has been the custom to watch the rooks with particular interest at Easter-time, for from the manner of their flight and the mood of their cawing, hints of coming events were believed to be obtainable. But most of those who watch rooks to-day find sufficient interest in their present and past. We wish one of those ornithologists who give us admirably intimate studies of the "Home Life" of particular birds would make a detailed critical study of the rook. There are so many points of great interest. Like many creatures well endowed with brains, rooks exhibit what must be called play. There are gambols and sham-fights, frolics and wild chases, in which, curiously enough, jackdaws and lapwings sometimes become keenly interested. But who knows the real truth about rooks posting sentinels, which is so often alleged? What has been called the "ecclesiastical air" of the rook, enhanced by the white about the head, gives spice to an apparent humorousness, and there is no doubt of their wisdom. But who knows the significance of the vast congregations that are sometimes seen, and who can tell us if there is any truth at all in the alleged "trials" of individuals who have defied the conventions of the community? It is interesting to know that the rook is a partial migrant, for there is a great ebb and flow every autumn and spring, and this

may be connected with the flitting from the rookery to the roosting-place that we see in September. There may be far over a thousand nests in a rookery and the same site may be used for more than a century; and it is very interesting to have statistics such as Mr. Hugh S. Gladstone has given for Dumfriesshire, showing how old rookeries have waned and young colonies have grown, or to see in the enclosed rookeries of towns the evidence of an almost forgotten urbanization of the country. But the central interest is in the rook's reaching forward to a communal life with certain conventions, and to the crowded nests in which we see the beginning of a continuous social heritage of objectively enregistered traditions.

—*J. Arthur Thomson*

From "Secrets of Animal Life"
By permission of the Author

WHY I STICK TO THE FARM

"Why do I stick to the farm?"

You might as well ask a woodchuck why he sticks to his hole.

This comparison has more foundation in fact than you perhaps imagine, for whenever I come home from a little visit to the outer world I always turn into the lane with a joyous chuckle that is much like the chuckle that a woodchuck chuckles when he dives into his tunnel. The farm is a place of peace, a place of refuge, and a home. This is a point on which the woodchuck and I are entirely agreed.

The farm means all these things to me because I was born on it and have learned to realize something of its possibilities. All my memories of childhood and boyhood are bound up with it. To be born on a farm is the greatest good that can befall a human being. To live on a farm and enjoy all that it has to offer is the greatest good that can be attained by a poet or a philosopher.

To make it clear why I harbour these convictions it is necessary to sweep away some mistaken notions about farming. To do this perhaps I cannot do better than explain just how this particular farm came to be hewn from the wilderness. The work of clearing the land and bringing it under cultivation was done by men and women who had only one purpose in life—to establish a home where they and their children might be free. They made their home self-sustaining—winning their

food, clothing, and shelter from the land and its products, by the labour of their own hands. The home was their ideal. All the farm work was undertaken to provide for its needs, and when the home was supplied they rested. Their ambition was satisfied.

Brought up in this home I missed learning too young the lessons that destroy so many homes. To begin with I had only the vaguest ideas of personal ownership. The home belonged to all of us and our work went to keep it up and pay expenses. It is true that contact with the world finally educated the children to ideas of personal property and roused our ambitions. Driven by these generally accepted ideas we went our way, but somehow the farm that had been started right stayed in the backs of our minds as home. Although I have lived in far countries and great cities, no place ever was my home except this farm. And in due time I came back to try to carry on the home tradition that had been established by a pioneer father and mother.

I stick to the farm because it is the most satisfactory thing in the world to stick to. It is solid, right down to the centre of the earth. It stays right where it is through depressions, panics, wars, and every other kind of human foolishness. Even an earthquake could only joggle it, and this is not an earthquake region.

Moreover, you can't speed up the farm. It is timed to the sun and the seasons. Airships may pass over it at the rate of one hundred and fifty miles an hour, but the thistledowns that rise from my fields go at the rate of the prevailing wind, just as they did when they rose from the Garden of Eden. You can't hurry the farm and you can't hurry me. The grass grows and the leaves come out when spring comes dawdling back from the south, and not one minute before.

I stick to the farm because it is the only thing I have ever found that is entirely dependable. The seed-time and the harvest come to it every year with easy-going and unworried certainty. They never come twice at exactly the same time nor bring the same bounties, but they never fail to come. They may fail to bring wheat, but if they do they will bring abundant corn:

> Cold and dry for wheat and rye,
> Wet and warm for Indian corn.

The farm means *safety first* with the safety guaranteed by all-embracing Nature—and the labour of your own hands. It is well not to forget the labour of your own hands.

To get the fullest enjoyment out of the farm you must do things for it with your own hands. A farm is like a friend. The more you do for a friend the better you like him, and the more you do for a farm the dearer it becomes to you.

Although I am friends with all the trees on the farm, the ones I like best are those that I planted myself. The shade trees that I planted myself seem to throw a more generous shade than any other, and no apple tastes as good as one from a tree that I planted, fertilized, pruned, sprayed, and looked after myself. I have planted thousands of trees in the wood-lot, and no artist ever got such a thrill from looking at his finished masterpiece as I get whenever I visit my plantation and see how much the trees have grown since my last visit. To get the most out of a farm you must put yourself into it—do things for it that will be permanent—do them with your own hands.

Of course, farming means hard work. That side of it has been harped on until even a lot of farmers think it means nothing else. That tale has been told since the

beginning until it has become exactly what Tennyson has called it:

> A tale of little meaning
> Although its words are strong.

But even the hardest-working farmer can afford to devote an occasional few minutes to enjoyment—especially at meal-times. Let us give some consideration to this more frivolous side of farming. Let us begin with the spring. When the warm winds and the rain begin to sweep away the snow and to unbind the shackles of frost, just draw a deep breath and realize that you are more alive than anything else on earth. The farmer's work is with the very elements of life, and he should enjoy life to the full. Even the cattle begin to bawl and show an interest in life as soon as the grass shows green beyond the barnyard fence. You do not even have to stop your work to hear the first notes of the song sparrow or the honking of the wild geese passing overhead. The sun is busier than you are, bringing warmth and growth to every seed, bud, and root—to wildflowers and weeds as well as to your precious wheat—and see how serene he is about it all. He can even take time to jocularly burn a blister on the back of your neck on his busiest day.

The tulips and the daffodils in the garden need only a glance to give you their message of beauty, and if you happen to be hurrying through the wood-lot you can surely pause long enough to see the anemones and spring beauties at your feet.

On this particular farm the opening rite of spring is tapping the sugar-bush. But I will not dwell on the joys of making sugar, for all farms are not blessed with sugar-maples.

But my delight in maple syrup is hardly over before

I begin paying furtive visits to the asparagus bed. I planted that asparagus myself, and I like to be on hand the first morning that a thick, fat shoot pushes up through the ground. After the asparagus come strawberries, raspberries, new potatoes—a list that becomes more crowded as the seasons pass, until we have picked the last apples and pitted the potatoes in the fall. Spring, summer and autumn are all linked together with beauties and luxuries and delights.

And even the winter has its charms. As the animals are more dependent on us they become more friendly. Horses, cows, sheep, pigs, hens, all greet us in their own characteristic way when we visit them in the morning. And what is more exhilarating than the days spent in the wood-lot, with the snow crunching underfoot and the axe rousing the frosty echoes? The farmer prepares his year's supply of fuel without thought of strikes or soaring prices.

Of course, if you estimate everything in terms of dollars you can never understand why I stick to the farm. Dollars enter very little into the question. If you wish you may quote me a price for the basket of new potatoes I bring in from the garden, but what price can you put on the satisfaction I get from digging potatoes of my own planting and tending? Can you put a price on the joy of turning up a hill of big ones that might have taken the prize at the fall fair and knowing that all this is due to my practical partnership with Nature in producing them? The potatoes themselves may satisfy bodily hunger, but the joy of producing them satisfies the soul's hunger for creation, and it is priceless.

While meditating on this aspect of farm life I went for a ramble in the pasture-field to hunt for mushrooms. For half an hour—while picking up beauties

—I canvassed my memory to see if I could remember the price I had got for anything I had ever sold off the farm. Although I have lived on this farm most of my life and have sold all kinds of farm stock and produce, I could not remember the exact price I got for one item. But I remembered how beautiful the apples were the first year we pruned and sprayed the old orchard. I could remember how fine the oats looked the year we had them in the field back of the root-house. I remembered litters of little pigs that were as plump as sausages and as cunning as kittens. I remembered calves that I had fed to admired sleekness and hogs that I had stuffed to fatness, but the prices they fetched I could not remember.

And that was not because I did not need the money —I have always needed the money and sometimes needed it bitterly—but the cash crop was not the crop that satisfied. As I let my memory wander over the past, hunting for prices that had failed to make a record, I remembered climbing the pear tree to get a big pear that had lodged in a fork and had ripened lusciously in the sun. I remembered tramping through a wet pasture gathering mushrooms and how a little moist hand stole into mine because a little maiden was afraid of a cow we were passing. I remembered coasting with a home-made sled on a little bank beside the creek, and also remembered seeing my children coasting on that same bank on sleds of their own making. I could see in the perspective of memory great piles of apples under the trees, shining fields of corn, colts scampering in the pastures, lambs playing king of the castle on anthills—a crowding, joyous film of homely pictures that brought happy tears to my eyes—and there was not a dollar mark on one of them. The dollars are necessary, of course—

very necessary—but you can earn dollars digging in a sewer, or get them by sharp practices in business. But where else but on the farm can you get the needful dollars and forget them in the joy of your surroundings?

These are a few of the reasons why I stick to the farm, and I feel sure that the woodchuck would endorse every word I have written.

—Peter McArthur

From "Familiar Fields"
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Toronto

ON HATING STRANGERS

There is one story of Charles Lamb, and I think only one, that I have never been able to appreciate. There are several versions of it, but writing from memory, I think the one that is best known runs something like this: Lamb was once hotly assailing the character and reputation of a certain person, when his hearer, rather surprised at this outburst, interrupted it to say that he had no idea that Lamb knew the man in question. "Know him!" Lamb exclaimed. "Of course I don't know him. I never could hate anyone I knew." Now I have never been able to appreciate this story because it is always given as an illustration of Lamb's delightful eccentricity and love of paradox, and so forth, and as such it fails lamentably. Lamb's reply, though doubtless unexpected, was quite simple and sincere; it does not point, as his biographers would seem to think, to some trait or habit of mind almost peculiar to himself. Most of us could, in all sincerity, have made exactly the same reply. We English are like that. We reserve our real hatred for people we do not know.

Other races take more kindly to strangers than we do; they are more polite, more obliging, more hospitable; with us the Lancashire saying, "Here's a stranger. Heave half a brick at him," points to an extreme but nevertheless indicates a general attitude of mind. But, on the other hand, we do not indulge in feuds and vendettas and relentless persecutions. We leave such things to the more polite and hospitable races. Once we know a man, we may quarrel with him, may even give

him a drubbing, but hate him?—never. I suppose we all have a certain amount of hatred that we must dispose of somehow, and, speaking generally, it seems to me that our English habit of working it off on people we do not know is altogether admirable. Thus, to take two familiar examples of our coldness and reserve, the English hotel and the English railway carriage; these places are nothing more nor less than repositories of hatred, safety-valves of dislike and antipathy, and, as such, sweeten our private lives and save families and friendships from ruin. We use these places as a sink for our black and bitter humours. The country that has the cheerful hotels has the cheerless homes. The races that are apt to be friendly with their fellow-travellers are equally apt to be capable of stabbing and poisoning their relatives and acquaintances. We on our side do such bitter business when we are among strangers, when we are on a journey or putting up for a night somewhere; we poison with a cold supercilious glance; we stab with an irritable jerk of our newspapers in the reading-room, and after that we are able to depart, to resume our private life, cleansed and serene and radiating good-will.

This habit of generalizing too quickly will, I know, eventually get me into trouble. I am not at all sure that "we" do these things; what I do really know is that I do them. Among my friends and acquaintances, I generally pass for a mild man, but when I am abroad and among strangers, I scatter death and destruction. I sentence whole crowds to transportation and sign innumerable death-warrants. On a single journey on the Underground, I can outdo Nero or Tamerlane himself. I have only to be travelling on a bus or suburban train when the children come crowding in from school, and I can out-Herod Herod. I spare neither sex nor age: let them all

perish. A single pair of squeaky shoes has made me condemn a man for life to the galleys or plantations. An overpowdered nose, a silly stare, a monstrous side-whisker, a penetrating voice, all these trifles have made me clap my hands and call for my executioners. And when the occasion really provides some excuse for my cold fury, then it is terrible indeed. If, for example, I happen to be at a concert to which the Society of Public Nuisances has sent its representatives (armed with the usual large tin-trays and cannon-balls to drop on them), then my malevolence passes all bounds; I go to the East for unspeakable tortures or invent new ones myself for these wretched fellows. The minor representatives of the Society, such as the women whose duty it is to rustle specially prepared paper-bags throughout the performance, I usually sentence to twelve years or so on a desert island. But wherever I go, if it is among strangers, it is always the same: outlawry, banishment, incarceration, torture, and execution, follow in my wake. Thus my entire stock of hatred is at an end by the time I have returned to my family and friends; I am all good-nature once again, and can put up with almost anything. There could hardly be a more fortunate arrangement for a man's feelings, for where I carry my dislikes, I have little power to do injury (except in imagination), and where I have that power, I have no longer the desire to make use of it.

I am ready, too, to confess that my dislike of certain strangers is usually entirely absurd. Quite a number of my best friends are people who, when I knew them only by sight or repute, filled me with positive loathing. And even when I met most of them, it was some time before my dislike abated. I have never loved at first sight. My first impressions are generally wrong, and though I am ready to argue from them, to inflate all

manner of whimsical prejudices, as a strict matter of fact, I distrust them so much that I should never act upon them unless absolutely compelled by circumstances to do so. As for those people who boast that when they met So-and-So for the first time, "something told" them that he or she was going to be a great friend or enemy of theirs, and then go on to prove that it all fell out accordingly, such persons are merely guilty of a little common self-deception. Most of us, when we first meet people, have what we are pleased to call premonitions, sudden flashes of insight, seemingly instantaneous judgments, but if we are wise we do not pay much attention to them. Though I have no doubt that some one at this present moment is sitting down to prove that such rapid verdicts come from the unconscious mind (which alone, nowadays, can do no wrong), and are therefore right and proper and to be trusted; for my own part I have found them thoroughly untrustworthy, being nothing more than the sum of a large number of little effects, the result of clothes, hair, tone of voice, manner, and so on, all things of little ultimate importance. So, too, that sixth sense, that intuition, that amazing insight into character, with which woman is commonly credited, is nothing more than a pleasant little myth. If woman did possess such a remarkable faculty, it would go hard with my sex; but as it is, she possesses it not, and so too often life goes hard with her.

Perhaps there are no strangers against whom we are so heartily prejudiced as the friends of our friends, the people we never see but hear so much about, the people with whom we shall get on so well when we do meet them. We never for a moment believe that these tedious unknowns are one-half so interesting, so clever, so kindly, as we are told they are; always we have the secret convic-

tion that our enthusiastic friends have been for once deceived. There may be a little jealousy at the root of this feeling of ours, but usually we are simply irritated by the fact of our having to listen to an account of persons unknown to us, a record that is closed to us and therefore tedious, quite unlike the genial hue-and-cry of a talk about friends we have in common. I began with Charles Lamb, and I can very well end with him, for once he expressed, very forcibly, what we have all felt at some time or other. The story can be found in Moore's Diary:

"Kenny to-day mentioned Charles Lamb's being once bored by a lady praising to him 'such a charming man!' etc., etc., ending with 'I know him, bless him!' on which Lamb said, 'Well, I don't, but d—n him, at a hazard.'"

And so, I think, say all of us.

—*J. B. Priestley*

From "I for One"
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THE DOLL'S HOUSE

When dear old Mrs. Hay went back to town after staying with the Burnells she sent the children a doll's house. It was so big that the carter and Pat carried it into the courtyard, and there it stayed, propped up on two wooden boxes beside the feed-room door. No harm could come to it; it was summer. And perhaps the smell of paint would have gone off by the time it had to be taken in. For, really, the smell of paint coming from that doll's house ("Sweet of old Mrs. Hay, of course; most sweet and generous!")—but the smell of paint was quite enough to make anyone seriously ill, in Aunt Beryl's opinion. Even before the sacking was taken off. And when it was . . .

There stood the Doll's house, a dark, oily, spinach green, picked out with bright yellow. Its two solid little chimneys, glued on to the roof, were painted red and white, and the door, gleaming with yellow varnish, was like a little slab of toffee. Four windows, real windows, were divided into panes by a broad streak of green. There was actually a tiny porch, too, painted yellow, with big lumps of congealed paint hanging along the edge.

But perfect, perfect little house! Who could possibly mind the smell. It was part of the joy, part of the newness.

"Open it quickly, someone!"

The hook at the side was stuck fast. Pat pried it open with his penknife, and the whole house front swung back, and—there you were, gazing at one and the same

moment into the drawing-room and dining-room, the kitchen and two bedrooms. That is the way for a house to open! Why don't all houses open like that? How much more exciting than peering through the slit of a door into a mean little hall with a hatstand and two umbrellas! That is—isn't it?—what you long to know about a house when you put your hand on the knocker. Perhaps it is the way God opens houses at the dead of night when He is taking a quiet turn with an angel. . . .

"O-oh!" The Burnell children sounded as though they were in despair. It was too marvellous; it was too much for them. They had never seen anything like it in their lives. All the rooms were papered. There were pictures on the walls, painted on the paper, with gold frames complete. Red carpet covered all the floors except the kitchen; red plush chairs in the drawing-room, green in the dining-room; tables, beds with real bedclothes, a cradle, a stove, a dresser with tiny plates and one big jug. But what Kezia liked more than anything, what she liked frightfully, was the lamp. It stood in the middle of the dining-room table, an exquisite l ttle amber lamp with a white globe It was even filled all ready for lighting, though, of course, you couldn't light it. But there was something inside that looked like oil and moved when you shook it.

The father and mother dolls, who sprawled very stiff as though they had fainted in the drawing-room, and their two little children asleep upstairs, were really too big for the doll's house. They didn't look as though they belonged. But the lamp was perfect. It seemed to smile at Kezia, to say, "I live here." The lamp was real.

The Burnell children could hardly walk to school fast enough the next morning. They burned to tell

everybody, to describe, to—well—to boast about their doll's house before the school-bell rang.

"I'm to tell," said Isabel, "because I'm the eldest. And you two can join in after. But I'm to tell first."

There was nothing to answer. Isabel was bossy, but she was always right, and Lottie and Kezia knew too well the powers that went with being eldest. They brushed through the thick buttercups at the road edge and said nothing.

"And I'm to choose who's to come and see it first. Mother said I might."

For it had been arranged that while the doll's house stood in the courtyard they might ask the girls at school, two at a time, to come and look. Not to stay to tea, of course, or to come traipsing through the house. But just to stand quietly in the courtyard while Isabel pointed out the beauties, and Lottie and Kezia looked pleased. . . .

But hurry as they might, by the time they had reached the tarred palings of the boys' playground the bell had begun to jangle. They only just had time to whip off their hats and fall into line before the roll was called. Never mind. Isabel tried to make up for it by looking very important and mysterious and by whispering behind her hand to the girls near her, "Got something to tell you at playtime."

Playtime came and Isabel was surrounded. The girls of her class nearly fought to put their arms round her, to walk away with her, to beam flatteringly, to be her special friend. She held quite a court under the huge pine trees at the side of the playground. Nudging, giggling together, the little girls pressed up close. And the only two who stayed outside the ring were the two who were always outside, the little Kelveys. They knew better than to come anywhere near the Burnells.

For the fact was, the school the Burnell children went to was not at all the kind of place their parents would have chosen if there had been any choice. But there was none. It was the only school for miles. And the consequence was all the children of the neighbourhood, the Judge's little girls, the doctor's daughters, the store-keeper's children, the milkman's, were forced to mix together. Not to speak of there being an equal number of rude, rough, little boys as well. But the line had to be drawn somewhere. It was drawn at the Kelveys. Many of the children, including the Burnells, were not allowed even to speak to them. They walked past the Kelveys with their heads in the air, and as they set the fashion in all matters of behaviour, the Kelveys were shunned by everybody. Even the teacher had a special voice for them, and a special smile for the other children when Lil Kelvey came up to her desk with a bunch of dreadfully common-looking flowers.

They were the daughters of a spry, hard-working little washerwoman, who went about from house to house by the day. This was awful enough. But where was Mr. Kelvey? Nobody knew for certain. But everybody said he was in prison. So they were the daughters of a washerwoman and a gaolbird. Very nice company for other people's children! And they looked it. Why Mrs. Kelvey made them so conspicuous was hard to understand. The truth was they were dressed in "bits" given to her by the people for whom she worked. Lil, for instance, who was a stout, plain child, with big freckles, came to school in a dress made from a green art-serge table-cloth of the Burnells', with red plush sleeves from the Logans' curtains. Her hat, perched on top of her high forehead, was a grown-up woman's hat, once the property of Miss Lecky, the postmistress.

It was turned up at the back and trimmed with a large scarlet quill. What a little guy she looked! It was impossible not to laugh. And her little sister, our Else, wore a long white dress, rather like a nightgown, and a pair of little boy's boots. But whatever our Else wore she would have looked strange. She was a tiny wishbone of a child, with cropped hair and enormous, solemn eyes—a little white owl. Nobody had ever seen her smile; she scarcely ever spoke. She went through life holding on to Lil, with a piece of Lil's skirt screwed up in her hand. Where Lil went, our Else followed. In the playground, on the road going to and from school, there was Lil marching in front and our Else holding on behind. Only when she wanted anything, or when she was out of breath, our Else gave Lil a tug, a twitch, and Lil stopped and turned round. The Kelveys never failed to understand each other.

Now they hovered at the edge; you couldn't stop them listening. When the little girls turned round and sneered, Lil, as usual, gave her silly, shamefaced smile, but our Else only looked.

And Isabel's voice, so very proud, went on telling. The carpet made a great sensation, but so did the beds with real bedclothes, and the stove with an oven door.

When she finished Kezia broke in. "You've forgotten the lamp, Isabel."

"Oh, yes," said Isabel, "and there's a teeny little lamp, all made of yellow glass, with a white globe that stands on the dining-room table. You couldn't tell it from a real one."

"The lamp's best of all," cried Kezia. She thought Isabel wasn't making half enough of the little lamp. But nobody paid any attention. Isabel was choosing the two who were to come back with them that afternoon

and see it. She chose Emmie Cole and Lena Logan. But when the others knew they were all to have a chance, they couldn't be nice enough to Isabel. One by one they put their arms round Isabel's waist and walked her off. They had something to whisper to her, a secret. "Isabel's *my* friend."

Only the little Kelveys moved away forgotten; there was nothing more for them to hear.

Days passed, and as more children saw the doll's house, the fame of it spread. It became the one subject, the rage. The one question was, "Have you seen Burnells' doll's house? Oh, ain't it lovely!" "Haven't you seen it? Oh, I say!"

Even the dinner hour was given up to talking about it. The little girls sat under the pines eating their thick mutton sandwiches and big slabs of johnny cake spread with butter. While always, as near as they could get, sat the Kelveys, our Else holding on to Lil, listening too, while they chewed their jam sandwiches out of a newspaper soaked with large red blobs.

"Mother," said Kezia, "can't I ask the Kelveys just once?"

"Certainly not, Kezia."

"But why not?"

"Run away, Kezia; you know quite well why not."

At last everybody had seen it except them. On that day the subject rather flagged. It was the dinner hour. The children stood together under the pine trees, and suddenly, as they looked at the Kelveys eating out of their paper, always by themselves, always listening, they wanted to be horrid to them. Emmie Cole started the whisper.

"Lil Kelvey's going to be a servant when she grows up."

"O-oh, how awful!" said Isabel Burnell, and she made eyes at Emmie.

Emmie swallowed in a very meaning way and nodded to Isabel as she'd seen her mother do on those occasions.

"It's true—it's true—it's true," she said.

Then Lena Logan's little eyes snapped. "Shall I ask her?" she whispered.

"Bet you don't," said Jessie May.

"Pooh, I'm not frightened," said Lena. Suddenly she gave a little squeal and danced in front of the other girls. "Watch! Watch me! Watch me now!" said Lena. And sliding, gliding, dragging one foot, giggling behind her hand, Lena went over to the Kelveys.

Lil looked up from her dinner. She wrapped the rest quickly away. Our Else stopped chewing. What was coming now?

"Is it true you're going to be a servant when you grow up, Lil Kelvey?" shrilled Lena.

Dead silence. But instead of answering, Lil only gave her silly, shamefaced smile. She didn't seem to mind the question at all. What a sell for Lena! The girls began to titter.

Lena couldn't stand that. She put her hands on her hips; she shot forward. "Yah, yer father's in prison!" she hissed, spitefully.

This was such a marvellous thing to have said that the little girls rushed away in a body, deeply, deeply excited, wild with joy. Someone found a long rope, and they began skipping. And never did they skip so high, run in and out so fast, or do such daring things as on that morning.

In the afternoon Pat called for the Burnell children with the buggy and they drove home. There were visitors. Isabel and Lottie, who liked visitors, went

upstairs to change their pinafores. But Kezia thieved out at the back. Nobody was about; she began to swing on the big white gates of the courtyard. Presently, looking along the road, she saw two little dots. They grew bigger, they were coming towards her. Now she could see that one was in front and one close behind. Now she could see that they were the Kelveys. Kezia stopped swinging. She slipped off the gate as if she was going to run away. Then she hesitated. The Kelveys came nearer, and beside them walked their shadows, very long, stretching right across the road with their heads in the buttercups. Kezia clambered back on the gate; she had made up her mind; she swung out.

"Hullo," she said to the passing Kelveys.

They were so astounded that they stopped. Lil gave her silly smile. Our Else stared.

"You can come and see our doll's house if you want to," said Kezia, and she dragged one toe on the ground. But at that Lil turned red and shook her head quickly.

"Why not?" asked Kezia.

Lil gasped, then she said, "Your ma told our ma you wasn't to speak to us."

"Oh, well," said Kezia. She didn't know what to reply. "It doesn't matter. You can come and see our doll's house all the same. Come on. Nobody's looking."

But Lil shook her head still harder.

"Don't you want to?" asked Kezia.

Suddenly there was a twitch, a tug at Lil's skirt. She turned round. Our Else was looking at her with big, imploring eyes; she was frowning; she wanted to go. For a moment Lil looked at our Else very doubtfully. But then our Else twitched her skirt again. She started forward. Kezia led the way. Like two little stray cats

they followed across the courtyard to where the doll's house stood.

"There it is," said Kezia.

There was a pause. Lil breathed loudly, almost snorted; our Else was still as stone.

"I'll open it for you," said Kezia kindly. She undid the hook and they looked inside.

"There's the drawing-room and the dining-room, and that's the—"

"Kezia!"

Oh, what a start they gave!

"Kezia!"

It was Aunt Beryl's voice. They turned round. At the back door stood Aunt Beryl, staring as if she couldn't believe what she saw.

"How dare you ask the little Kelveys into the courtyard?" said her cold, furious voice. "You know as well as I do, you're not allowed to talk to them. Run away, children, run away at once. And don't come back again," said Aunt Beryl. And she stepped into the yard and shooed them out as if they were chickens.

"Off you go immediately!" she called, cold and proud.

They did not need telling twice. Burning with shame, shrinking together, Lil huddling along like her mother, our Else dazed, somehow they crossed the big courtyard and squeezed through the white gate.

"Wicked, disobedient little girl!" said Aunt Beryl bitterly to Kezia, and she slammed the doll's house to.

The afternoon had been awful. A letter had come from Willie Brent, a terrifying, threatening letter, saying if she did not meet him that evening in Pulman's Bush, he'd come to the front door and ask the reason why!

But now that she had frightened those little rats of Kelveys and given Kezia a good scolding, her heart felt lighter. That ghastly pressure was gone. She went back to the house humming.

When the Kelveys were well out of sight of Burnells', they sat down to rest on a big red drainpipe by the side of the road. Lil's cheeks were still burning; she took off the hat with the quill and held it on her knee. Dreamily they looked over the hay paddocks, past the creek, to the group of wattles where Logan's cows stood waiting to be milked. What were their thoughts?

Presently our Else nudged up close to her sister. But now she had forgotten the cross lady. She put out a finger and stroked her sister's quill; she smiled her rare smile.

"I seen the little lamp," she said, softly.

Then both were silent once more.

—*Katherine Mansfield*

From "The Doll's House and Other Stories"
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Katherine Mansfield, London

THE PEAL OF BELLS

"Surely I shall not spend my whole life with my own total disapprobation."—*Dr. Johnson on his 72nd birthday*

It is a new year, and I have begun a new life. This, I think, is better than merely talking about it. But it is more difficult and brings one just as little credit. No one, indeed, seems to observe the signs of the new life except the man who is leading it. I once had a friend who told his wife that he was beginning a new life, and who went with her to a New Year's Eve party at which he thought he was being particularly abstemious, while she thought he was denying himself nothing. The next morning he complained of a headache. "Of course, you have a headache," she told him, and added: "I thought you said you were going to begin a new life." "Much good there is in beginning a new life," he retorted bitterly, "when you don't even notice it. Last night *was* the beginning of the new life!" He, I suppose, remembered chiefly the things he had refused at the party, while she remembered chiefly the things he had taken. There is always this personal element in our judgments of ourselves and of each other. We cannot go about, unfortunately, telling everybody about the temptations we have resisted. As a result, people judge us exclusively by the temptations to which we yield. This is very hard on those of us who are unusually susceptible to temptation and who frequently succumb out of sheer inability to go on resisting for ever.

Knowing myself intimately, I am able to take a more sympathetic view of myself than other people can be

expected to take, and I forgive myself for shortcomings that in anybody else would distress me. It is a very unhealthy frame of mind to get into to be always reproaching oneself for one's peccadilloes. I am sure the most cheerful people are those who confine their censures almost entirely to the lapses of their neighbours. This is also, I hold, the more modest attitude. Like other people, I desire a better world, but I have the wit to realize that I alone can do very little to improve things, while other people could improve the globe out of recognition in seven days, if only they would conquer their evil instincts. They are the human race: I am a helpless individual, an onlooker. It would be mere conceit to regard my own faults as being half so serious in their consequences as theirs. Hence I feel an honest glow of pleasure when I see other people behaving well, and I am melancholy when I see, or even hear of, other people behaving badly. I often long to direct them with good advice, and refrain only because I know that friendship itself will not stand the strain of very much good advice for very long. And so, while I am inwardly aching to preach to my errant fellow-creatures, I find myself talking to them instead about diet, diseases, cinemas, Bernard Shaw, and the day on which I backed three winning horses at Ascot. I doubt, indeed, if I have ever warned even an intimate friend against one of his minor faults. I doubt if any of my friends know that I know their faults. In spite of the pain that our friends' faults cause us, we keep up a fantastic pretence of blindness in order that we may remain tolerable to each other. That is why we have to talk behind people's backs. There is no other chance of talking freely. Then Truth comes out of her well, smiling and without a blush. How good it is to learn the worst about our friends and acquaintances from her

impartial lips! "A shrew"—"Drinks, doesn't he?"—"He's as mean as the devil"—"He and his wife quarrel in public so"—"The foulest bore in London"—"Always looks as if he had spilled soup down his waistcoat"—"Ruining himself gambling"—"He's got the most appalling swelled head"—"He's such a coward. Always runs away." These are the sort of things it is much better to say *about* a man or a woman than to say to their faces. There is such a thing as tact, which reminds us, for example, that, if we wish to tell the truth about a conceited man, it is better to wait until he has gone out of the room. He will not resent it then. He is so conceited that he will not even guess that we are saying how conceited he is. Some people would condemn this as scandalmongering. But surely it is better to tell the truth behind people's backs than never to tell it at all.

Besides, if we are to abolish this form of veracity, how are we going to preserve our moral standards? It is by listening to gossip about our friends that we learn to distinguish between right and wrong, and, as we see their reputations being torn more and more rapturously to pieces, they serve as a kind of awful warning to us, like the penitents confessing their sins at a revival meeting. And they are more fortunate than the penitents, for they do not have to confess their sins: we confess them for them. That grave, rather sad-looking little man—you would never guess what his vice was till someone told you when he had gone, that he had written an "Ode on the Intimations of Insobriety," and that his wife did not guess his secret till one night after he returned home from a party she found him folding up a bath towel and carefully putting it away in a drawer under the impression that it was his evening suit. From tales such as these we learn what sins to avoid and the importance of being

careful, but not too careful. And if the sin of which we are told does not happen to be one of our own favourite sins, to join in condemning it is noble practice in moral enthusiasm. Thus, the miser is a moral enthusiast as he condemns the spendthrift, and the spendthrift as he condemns the miser. The drunkard becomes a moral enthusiast as he tells the truth about the amorist, and the amorist as he tells the truth about the sot. The hypocrite, the sluggard, the glutton, the flatterer of the people, the slum landlord, the sweating employer, the harsh mistress, the lazy workman are all capable of such moral enthusiasm; and moral enthusiasm is not a thing with which we should part lightly.

Even so, I find it more difficult, as I get older, to confine my moral enthusiasm to the lives of other people, and I grow egotistically concerned about the life I myself am leading. I should not have believed you if you had told me twenty years ago that at my present age I should not have settled into more admirable and virtuous ways. The faults of a man who had reached or passed middle age used to surprise me when I was a boy, and if I saw in him signs of vanity or fear or greed or ill-temper, I disliked them as something unnatural. It seemed to me extraordinarily easy for a middle-aged man to be virtuous, and, indeed, I could hardly imagine what middle-aged men could find to do except behave well. I saw that a number of them abstained from doing so, but in their self-indulgences they seemed to me to be as defiant of common sense as white blackbirds. As I grew from boyhood to youth, I came to like many of these self-indulgent elders, but I thought of them chiefly as "rum coves," eccentrics, "old sports," and never as normal human beings who had arrived at years of discretion. When I came to read Horace in class, I learned

that it was by no means easy even for a middle-aged man to be virtuous, but I nevertheless remained sure that virtue was more temptingly within reach at the age of forty than at sixteen. And I knew in my bones, though not without sorrow, that Horace was right when he affirmed that there was a stage in life at which it was time for a man to bid good-bye to folly. As I sat under the stern eye of a master, and heard the Latin being translated into schoolboy English, I felt wave after wave of emotion sweeping over me—a wave of self-pity followed by a wave of intense resolve to play the man at some future date—at those curfew lines with which the second Epistle of the second Book of Epistles ends:

> Vivere si recte nescis, decede peritis.
> Lusisti satis, edisti satis atque bibisti;
> Tempus abire tibi est, ne potum largius aequo
> Rideat et pulset lasciva decentius aetas.

Even to-day, when I can no longer read Latin, and have to guess what "decede peritis" means, the lines continually haunt my memory and bring back those feelings of luxurious regret with which a boy many years ago used, in anticipation, to bid farewell to Epicurus and subscribe himself a Stoic. Alas, despite all this, I find myself as I grow older approaching much more nearly to the likeness of one of those "rum coves" I used to laugh at than to the graver portrait of the Stoic I admired.

Yet somewhere in me, I feel sure, a Stoic is buried and awaiting resurrection. "Ye're a young Stoic, Master Y.; ye're a regular Trojan," my nurse used to say to me, when she gave me some base medicine in a teaspoonful of raspberry jam and I took it without wincing. I did not know at the time what the words meant, and I don't think that she knew either, but I was pleased by her flattery, which she lavished on me on all occasions of dis-

comfort or danger. If she took me to the dentist's or put a lava-hot poultice on my chest, she always began and ended with: "Ye're a young Stoic, Master Y.; ye're a regular Trojan"; and, though it was not true, it made me feel a better and happier boy. Looking backward, I see in it an unfulfilled prophecy which I surely ought to have set about fulfilling some time ago, and I feel a better and happier man. What if now at last I should adopt the advice of Horace to himself—should listen even to the counsellor in my own breast—and should say to myself gently:

> Lusisti satis, edisti satis atque bibisti:
> Tempus abire tibi est,

and rise from the tables of pleasure and leave the sweet dishes of folly to younger mouths? There is something attractive to me in the prospect. The bare and frugal board of the Stoics has its own charm. There is no pleasure to surpass that of liberation. Philosophers aver that the chains that bind me are so fragile that they will break at a touch, and indeed that, at a mere wish, I can sever them one by one—indolence, self-indulgence, envy, fear and folly—and escape. How delightful to achieve a godlike indifference to the things that one knows do not really matter and that do matter to one so much! How else is it possible to become serene—which is the visible grace of wisdom? "A man," my doctor tells me, "is either a fool or a physician at forty," and it is also true, I fancy, that at that age a man is either a fool or a philosopher. O miserable choice between the rival pleasures of folly and philosophy! I have tried for a long time to combine them by enjoying the pleasures of folly in practice to-day and the pleasures of philosophy in anticipation to-morrow. Even that, however, becomes a jangling and uneasy compromise with advancing years,

and I grow more and more convinced that some time or other, sooner or later—perhaps this very year—the grand break with folly must be made. In facing this fact, I feel that I have taken the first step into a new life, and, so far, the New Year seems to me to have begun excellently well. Lusisti satis. True. . . . Good night, folly! Good morning, virtue!

—*Robert Lynd* ("*Y.Y.*")

From "The Peal of Bells"
By permission of Methuen & Co., London

THE CASE FOR THE ARTIST

By an "artist" I mean Shakespeare and Me and Bach and Myself and Velasquez and Phidias, and even You if you have ever written four lines on the sunset in somebody's album, or modelled a Noah's Ark for your little boy in plasticine. Perhaps we have not quite reached the heights where Shakespeare stands, but we are on his track. Shakespeare can be representative of all of us, or Velasquez if you prefer him. One of them shall be President of our United Artists' Federation. Let us, then, consider what place in the scheme of things our federation can claim.

Probably we artists have all been a little modest about ourselves lately. During the War we asked ourselves gloomily what use we were to the State compared with the noble digger of coals, the much-to-be-reverenced maker of boots, and the god-like grower of wheat. Looking at the pictures in the illustrated papers of brawny, half-dressed men pushing about blocks of red-hot iron, we have told ourselves that these heroes were the pillars of society, and that we were just an incidental decoration. It was a wonder that we were allowed to live. And now in these days of strikes, when a single union of manual workers can hold up the rest of the nation, it is a bitter reflection to us that, if we were to strike, the country would go on its way quite happily, and nine-tenths of the population would not even know that we had downed our pens and brushes.

If there is any artist who has been depressed by such thoughts as these, let him take comfort. *We are all right.*

I made the discovery that we were all right by studying the life of the bee. All that I knew about bees until yesterday was derived from that great naturalist, Dr. Isaac Watts. In common with every one who has been a child I knew that the insect in question improved each shining hour by something honey something something every something flower. I had also heard that bees could not sting you if you held your breath, a precaution which would make conversation by the herbaceous border an affair altogether too spasmodic; and, finally, that in any case the same bee could only sting you once—though, apparently, there was no similar provision of Nature's that the same person could not be stung twice.

Well, that was all that I knew about bees until yesterday. I used to see them about the place from time to time, busy enough, no doubt, but really no busier than I was; and as they were not much interested in me they had no reason to complain that I was not much interested in them. But since yesterday, when I read a book which dealt fully, not only with the public life of the bee, but with the most intimate details of its private life, I have looked at them with a new interest and a new sympathy. For there is no animal which does not get more out of life than the pitiable insect which Dr. Watts holds up as an example to us.

Hitherto, it may be, you have thought of the bee as an admirable and industrious insect, member of a model community which worked day and night to but one end—the well-being of the coming race. You knew perhaps that it fertilized the flowers, but you also knew that the bee didn't know; you were aware that, if any bee deliberately went about trying to improve your delphiniums instead of gathering honey for the State, it would be turned down promptly by the other workers. For

nothing is done in the hive without this one utilitarian purpose. Even the drones take their place in the scheme of things; a minor place in the stud; and when the next generation is assured, and the drones cease to be useful and can now only revert to the ornamental, they are ruthlessly cast out.

It comes, then, to this. The bee devotes its whole life to preparing for the next generation. But what is the next generation going to do? It is going to spend its whole life preparing for the third generation . . . . . and so on for ever.

An admirable community, the moralists tell us. Poor moralists! To miss so much of the joy of life; to deny oneself the pleasure (to mention only one among many) of reclining lazily on one's back in a snap-dragon, watching the little white clouds sail past upon a sea of blue; to miss these things for no other reason than that the next generation may also have an opportunity of missing them—is that admirable? What do the bees think that they are doing? If they live a life of toil and self-sacrifice merely in order that the next generation may live a life of equal toil and self-sacrifice, what has been gained? Ask the next bee you meet what it thinks it is doing in this world, and the only answer it can give you is "Keeping up the supply of bees." Is that an admirable answer? How much more admirable if it could reply that it was eschewing all pleasure and living the life of a galley-slave in order that the next generation might have leisure to paint the poppy a more glorious scarlet. But no. The next generation is going at it just as hard for the same unproductive end; it has no wish to leave anything behind it—a new colour, a new scent, a new idea. It has one object only in this world—more bees. Could any scheme of life be more sterile?

Having come to this conclusion about the bee, I took fresh courage. I saw at once that it was the artist in Man which made him less contemptible than the Bee. That god-like person, the grower of wheat, assumed his proper level. Bread may be necessary to existence, but what is the use of existence if you are merely going to employ it in making bread? True, the farmer makes bread, not only for himself, but for the miner; and the miner produces coal—not only for himself, but for the farmer; and the farmer also produces bread for the maker of boots, who produces boots, not only for himself, but for the farmer and the miner. But you are still getting no further. It is the Life of the Bee over again, with no other object in it but mere existence. If this were all, there would be nothing to write on our tombstones but "Born, 1800; Died, 1880. *He lived till then.*"

But it is not all, because—and here I strike my breast proudly—because of us artists. Not only can we write on Shakespeare's tomb, "He wrote *Hamlet*" or "He was not for an age, but for all time," but we can write on a contemporary baker's tomb, "He provided bread for the man who wrote *Hamlet*," and on a contemporary butcher's tomb, "He was not only for himself, but for Shakespeare." We perceive, in fact, that the only matter upon which any worker, other than the artist, can congratulate himself, whether he be manual-worker, brain-worker, surgeon, judge, or politician, is that he is helping to make the world tolerable for the artist. It is only the artist who will leave anything behind him. He is the fighting-man, the man who counts; the others are merely the Army Service Corps of civilization. A world without its artists, a world of bees, would be as futile and as meaningless a thing as an army composed entirely of the A.S.C.

Possibly you put in a plea here for the explorer and the scientist. The explorer perhaps may stand alone. His discovery of a peak in Darien is something in itself, quite apart from the happy possibility that Keats may be tempted to bring it into a sonnet. Yes, if a Beef-Essence-Merchant has only provided sustenance for an Explorer he has not lived in vain, however much the poets and the painters recoil from his wares. But of the scientist I am less certain. I fancy that his invention of the telephone (for instance) can only be counted to his credit because it has brought the author into closer touch with his publisher.

So we artists (yes, and explorers) may be of good faith. They may try to pretend, these others, in their little times of stress, that we are nothing—decorative, inessential; that it is they who make the world go round. This will not upset us. We could not live without them; true. But (a much more bitter thought) they would have no reason for living at all, were it not for us.

—*A. A. Milne*

From "If I May"
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THE SECRET SHARER

I

On my right hand there were lines of fishing-stakes resembling a mysterious system of half-submerged bamboo fences, incomprehensible in its division of the domain of tropical fishes, and crazy of aspect as if abandoned forever by some nomad tribe of fishermen now gone to the other end of the ocean; for there was no sign of human habitation as far as the eye could reach. To the left a group of barren islets, suggesting ruins of stone walls, towers, and blockhouses, had its foundations set in a blue sea that itself looked solid, so still and stable did it lie below my feet; even the track of light from the westering sun shone smoothly, without that animated glitter which tells of an imperceptible ripple. And when I turned my head to take a parting glance at the tug which had just left us anchored outside the bar, I saw the straight line of the flat shore joined to the stable sea, edge to edge, with a perfect and unmarked closeness, in one levelled floor half brown, half blue under the enormous dome of the sky. Corresponding in their insignificance to the islets of the sea, two small clumps of trees, one on each side of the only fault in the impeccable joint, marked the mouth of the river Meinam we had just left on the first preparatory stage of our homeward journey; and, far back on the inland level, a larger and loftier mass, the grove surrounding the great Paknam pagoda, was the only thing on which the eye could rest from the vain task of exploring the monotonous sweep of the horizon. Here and there gleams as of a few scattered pieces of silver marked the windings of the great river; and on the nearest

of them, just within the bar, the tug steaming right into the land became lost to my sight, hull and funnel and masts, as though the impassive earth had swallowed her up without an effort, without a tremor. My eye followed the light cloud of her smoke, now here, now there, above the plain, according to the devious curves of the stream, but always fainter and farther away, till I lost it at last behind the mitre-shaped hill of the great pagoda. And then I was left alone with my ship, anchored at the head of the Gulf of Siam.

She floated at the starting-point of a long journey, very still in an immense stillness, the shadows of her spars flung far to the eastward by the setting sun. At that moment I was alone on her decks. There was not a sound in her—and around us nothing moved, nothing lived, not a canoe on the water, not a bird in the air, not a cloud in the sky. In this breathless pause at the threshold of a long passage we seemed to be measuring our fitness for a long and arduous enterprise, the appointed task of both our existences to be carried out, far from all human eyes, with only sky and sea for spectators and for judges.

There must have been some glare in the air to interfere with one's sight, because it was only just before the sun left us that my roaming eyes made out beyond the highest ridge of the principal islet of the group something which did away with the solemnity of perfect solitude. The tide of darkness flowed on swiftly; and with tropical suddenness a swarm of stars came out above the shadowy earth, while I lingered yet, my hand resting lightly on my ship's rail as if on the shoulder of a trusted friend. But, with all that multitude of celestial bodies staring down at one, the comfort of quiet communion with her was gone for good. And there were also disturbing sounds by this

time—voices, footsteps forward; the steward flitted along the main-deck, a busily ministering spirit; a hand-bell tinkled urgently under the poop-deck. . . .

I found my two officers waiting for me near the supper table, in the lighted cuddy. We sat down at once, and as I helped the chief mate, I said:

"Are you aware that there is a ship anchored inside the islands? I saw her mastheads above the ridge as the sun went down."

He raised sharply his simple face, overcharged by a terrible growth of whisker, and emitted his usual ejaculations: "Bless my soul, sir! You don't say so!"

My second mate was a round-cheeked, silent young man, grave beyond his years, I thought; but as our eyes happened to meet I detected a slight quiver on his lips. I looked down at once. It was not my part to encourage sneering on board my ship. It must be said, too, that I knew very little of my officers. In consequence of certain events of no particular significance, except to myself, I had been appointed to the command only a fortnight before. Neither did I know much of the hands forward. All these people had been together for eighteen months or so, and my position was that of the only stranger on board. I mention this because it has some bearing on what is to follow. But what I felt most was my being a stranger to the ship; and if all the truth must be told, I was somewhat of a stranger to myself. The youngest man on board (barring the second mate), and untried as yet by a position of the fullest responsibility, I was willing to take the adequacy of the others for granted. They had simply to be equal to their tasks; but I wondered how far I should turn out faithful to that ideal conception of one's own personality every man sets up for himself secretly.

Meantime the chief mate, with an almost visible effect of collaboration on the part of his round eyes and frightful whiskers, was trying to evolve a theory of the anchored ship. His dominant trait was to take all things into earnest consideration. He was of a painstaking turn of mind. As he used to say, he "liked to account to himself" for practically everything that came in his way, down to a miserable scorpion he had found in his cabin a week before. The why and the wherefore of that scorpion—how it got on board and came to select his room rather than the pantry (which was a dark place and more what a scorpion would be partial to), and how on earth it managed to drown itself in the inkwell of his writing-desk—had exercised him infinitely. The ship within the islands was much more easily accounted for; and just as we were about to rise from table he made his pronouncement. She was, he doubted not, a ship from home lately arrived. Probably she drew too much water to cross the bar except at the top of spring tides. Therefore she went into that natural harbour to wait for a few days in preference to remaining in an open roadstead.

"That's so," confirmed the second mate, suddenly, in his slightly hoarse voice. "She draws over twenty feet. She's the Liverpool ship *Sephora* with a cargo of coal. Hundred and twenty-three days from Cardiff."

We looked at him in surprise.

"The tugboat skipper told me when he came on board for your letters, sir," explained the young man. "He expects to take her up the river the day after to-morrow."

After thus overwhelming us with the extent of his information he slipped out of the cabin. The mate observed regretfully that he "could not account for that young fellow's whims." What prevented him telling us all about it at once, he wanted to know.

I detained him as he was making a move. For the last two days the crew had had plenty of hard work, and the night before they had very little sleep. I felt painfully that I—a stranger—was doing something unusual when I directed him to let all hands turn in without setting an anchor-watch. I proposed to keep on deck myself till one o'clock or thereabouts. I would get the second mate to relieve me at that hour.

"He will turn out the cook and the steward at four," I concluded, "and then give you a call. Of course, at the slightest sign of any sort of wind we'll have the hands up and make a start at once."

He concealed his astonishment. "Very well, sir." Outside the cuddy he put his head in the second mate's door to inform him of my unheard-of caprice to take a five hours' anchor-watch on myself. I heard the other raise his voice incredulously—"What? The captain himself?" Then a few more murmurs, a door closed, then another. A few moments later I went on deck.

My strangeness, which had made me sleepless, had prompted that unconventional arrangement, as if I had expected in those solitary hours of the night to get on terms with the ship of which I knew nothing, manned by men of whom I knew very little more. Fast alongside a wharf, littered like any ship in port with a tangle of unrelated things, invaded by unrelated shore people, I had hardly seen her yet properly. Now, as she lay cleared for sea, the stretch of her main-deck seemed to me very fine under the stars. Very fine, very roomy for her size, and very inviting. I descended the poop and paced the waist, my mind picturing to myself the coming passage through the Malay Archipelago, down the Indian Ocean, and up the Atlantic. All its phases were familiar enough to me, every characteristic, all the alternatives which were likely

to face me on the high seas—everything . . . except the novel responsibility of command. But I took heart from the reasonable thought that the ship was like other ships, the men like other men, and that the sea was not likely to keep any special surprises expressly for my discomfiture.

Arrived at that comforting conclusion, I bethought myself of a cigar and went below to get it. All was still down there. Everybody at the after end of the ship was sleeping profoundly. I came out again on the quarter-deck, agreeably at ease in my sleeping-suit on that warm breathless night, barefooted, a glowing cigar in my teeth, and, going forward, I was met by the profound silence of the fore end of the ship. Only as I passed the door of the forecastle I heard a deep, quiet, trustful sigh of some sleeper inside. And suddenly I rejoiced in the great security of the sea as compared with the unrest of the land, in my choice of that untempted life presenting no disquieting problems, invested with an elementary moral beauty by the absolute straightforwardness of its appeal and by the singleness of its purpose.

The riding-light in the fore-rigging burned with a clear, untroubled, as if symbolic, flame, confident and bright in the mysterious shades of the night. Passing on my way aft along the other side of the ship, I observed that the rope side-ladder, put over, no doubt, for the master of the tug when he came to fetch away our letters, had not been hauled in as it should have been. I became annoyed at this, for exactitude in small matters is the very soul of discipline. Then I reflected that I had myself peremptorily dismissed my officers from duty, and by my own act had prevented the anchor-watch being formally set and things properly attended to.

I asked myself whether it was wise ever to interfere with the established routine of duties even from the kindest of motives. My action might have made me appear eccentric. Goodness only knew how that absurdly whiskered mate would "account" for my conduct, and what the whole ship thought of that informality of their new captain. I was vexed with myself.

Not from compunction certainly, but, as it were mechanically, I proceeded to get the ladder in myself. Now a side-ladder of that sort is a light affair and comes in easily, yet my vigorous tug, which should have brought it flying on board, merely recoiled upon my body in a totally unexpected jerk. What the devil! . . . I was so astounded by the immovableness of that ladder that I remained stock-still, trying to account for it to myself like that imbecile mate of mine. In the end, of course, I put my head over the rail.

The side of the ship made an opaque belt of shadow on the darkling glassy shimmer of the sea. But I saw at once something elongated and pale floating very close to the ladder. Before I could form a guess a faint flash of phosphorescent light, which seemed to issue suddenly from the naked body of a man, flickered in the sleeping water with the elusive, silent play of summer lightning in a night sky. With a gasp I saw revealed to my stare a pair of feet, the long legs, a broad livid back immersed right up to the neck in a greenish cadaverous glow. One hand, awash, clutched the bottom rung of the ladder. He was complete but for the head. A headless corpse! The cigar dropped out of my gaping mouth with a tiny plop and a short hiss quite audible in the absolute stillness of all things under heaven. At that I suppose he raised up his face, a dimly pale oval in the shadow of the ship's side. But even then I could

only barely make out down there the shape of his black-haired head. However, it was enough for the horrid, frost-bound sensation which had gripped me about the chest to pass off. The moment of vain exclamations was past, too. I only climbed on the spare spar and leaned over the rail as far as I could, to bring my eyes nearer to that mystery floating alongside.

As he hung by the ladder, like a resting swimmer, the sea-lightning played about his limbs at every stir; and he appeared in it ghastly, silvery, fish-like. He remained as mute as a fish, too. He made no motion to get out of the water, either. It was inconceivable that he should not attempt to come on board, and strangely troubling to suspect that perhaps he did not want to. And my first words were prompted by just that troubled incertitude.

"What's the matter?" I asked in my ordinary tone, speaking down to the face upturned exactly under mine.

"Cramp," it answered, no louder. Then slightly anxious, "I say, no need to call any one."

"I was not going to," I said.

"Are you alone on deck?"

"Yes."

I had somehow the impression that he was on the point of letting go the ladder to swim away beyond my ken—mysterious as he came. But, for the moment, this being appearing as if he had risen from the bottom of the sea (it was certainly the nearest land to the ship) wanted only to know the time. I told him. And he, down there, tentatively:

"I suppose your captain's turned in?"

"I am sure he isn't," I said.

He seemed to struggle with himself, for I heard something like the low, bitter murmur of doubt. "What's

the good?" His next words came out with a hesitating effort.

"Look here, my man. Could you call him out quietly?"

I thought the time had come to declare myself.

"*I* am the captain."

I heard a "By Jove!" whispered at the level of the water. The phosphorescence flashed in the swirl of the water all about his limbs, his other hand seized the ladder.

"My name's Leggatt."

The voice was calm and resolute. A good voice. The self-possession of that man had somehow induced a corresponding state in myself. It was very quietly that I remarked:

"You must be a good swimmer."

"Yes. I've been in the water practically since nine o'clock. The question for me now is whether I am to let go this ladder and go on swimming till I sink from exhaustion, or—to come on board here."

I felt this was no mere formula of desperate speech, but a real alternative in the view of a strong soul. I should have gathered from this that he was young; indeed, it is only the young who are ever confronted by such clear issues. But at the time it was pure intuition on my part. A mysterious communication was established already between us two—in the face of that silent, darkened tropical sea. I was young, too; young enough to make no comment. The man in the water began suddenly to climb up the ladder, and I hastened away from the rail to fetch some clothes.

Before entering the cabin I stood still, listening in the lobby at the foot of the stairs. A faint snore came through the closed door of the chief mate's room. The

second mate's door was on the hook, but the darkness in there was absolutely soundless. He, too, was young and could sleep like a stone. Remained the steward, but he was not likely to wake up before he was called. I got a sleeping-suit out of my room and, coming back on deck, saw the naked man from the sea sitting on the main-hatch, glimmering white in the darkness, his elbows on his knees and his head in his hands. In a moment he had concealed his damp body in a sleeping-suit of the same grey-stripe pattern as the one I was wearing and followed me like my double on the poop. Together we moved right aft, barefooted, silent.

"What is it?" I asked in a deadened voice, taking the lighted lamp out of the binnacle, and raising it to his face.

"An ugly business."

He had rather regular features; a good mouth; light eyes under somewhat heavy, dark eyebrows; a smooth, square forehead; no growth on his cheeks; a small, brown moustache, and a well-shaped, round chin. His expression was concentrated, meditative, under the inspecting light of the lamp I held up to his face; such as a man thinking hard in solitude might wear. My sleeping-suit was just right for his size. A well-knit young fellow of twenty-five at most. He caught his lower lip with the edge of white, even teeth.

"Yes," I said, replacing the lamp in the binnacle. The warm, heavy tropical night closed upon his head again.

"There's a ship over there," he murmured.

"Yes, I know. The *Sephora*. Did you know of us?"

"Hadn't the slightest idea. I am the mate of her—" He paused and corrected himself. "I should say I *was*."

"Aha! Something wrong?"

"Yes. Very wrong indeed. I've killed a man."

"What do you mean? Just now?"

"No, on the passage. Weeks ago. Thirty-nine south. When I say a man—"

"Fit of temper," I suggested, confidently.

The shadowy, dark head, like mine, seemed to nod imperceptibly above the ghostly grey of my sleeping-suit. It was, in the night, as though I had been faced by my own reflection in the depths of a sombre and immense mirror.

"A pretty thing to have to own up to for a Conway boy," murmured my double, distinctly.

"You're a Conway boy?"

"I am," he said, as if startled. Then, slowly . . . "Perhaps you too—"

It was so; but being a couple of years older I had left before he joined. After a quick interchange of dates a silence fell; and I thought suddenly of my absurd mate with his terrific whiskers and the "Bless my soul—you don't say so" type of intellect. My double gave me an inkling of his thoughts by saying:

"My father's a parson in Norfolk. Do you see me before a judge and jury on that charge? For myself I can't see the necessity. There are fellows that an angel from heaven—And I am not that. He was one of those creatures that are just simmering all the time with a silly sort of wickedness. Miserable devils that have no business to live at all. He wouldn't do his duty and wouldn't let anybody else do theirs. But what's the good of talking! You know well enough the sort of ill-conditioned snarling cur—"

He appealed to me as if our experiences had been as identical as our clothes. And I knew well enough the pestiferous danger of such a character where there are

no means of legal repression. And I knew well enough also that my double there was no homicidal ruffian. I did not think of asking him for details, and he told me the story roughly in brusque, disconnected sentences. I needed no more. I saw it all going on as though I were myself inside that other sleeping-suit.

"It happened while we were setting a reefed foresail, at dusk. Reefed foresail! You understand the sort of weather. The only sail we had left to keep the ship running; so you may guess what it had been like for days. Anxious sort of job, that. He gave me some of his cursed insolence at the sheet. I tell you I was overdone with this terrific weather that seemed to have no end to it. Terrific, I tell you—and a deep ship. I believe the fellow himself was half-crazed with funk. It was no time for gentlemanly reproof, so I turned round and felled him like an ox. He up and at me. We closed just as an awful sea made for the ship. All hands saw it coming and took to the rigging, but I had him by the throat, and went on shaking him like a rat, the men above us yelling, "Look out! look out!" Then a crash as if the sky had fallen on my head. They say that for over ten minutes hardly anything was to be seen of the ship—just the three masts and a bit of the forecastle head and of the poop all awash driving along in a smother of foam. It was a miracle that they found us, jammed together behind the forebits. It's clear that I meant business, because I was holding him by the throat still when they picked us up. He was black in the face. It was too much for them. It seems they rushed us aft together, gripped as we were, screaming "Murder!" like a lot of lunatics, and broke into the cuddy. And the ship running for her life, touch and go all the time,

any minute her last in a sea fit to turn your hair grey only a-looking at it. I understand that the skipper, too, started raving like the rest of them. The man had been deprived of sleep for more than a week, and to have this sprung on him at the height of a furious gale nearly drove him out of his mind. I wonder they didn't fling me overboard after getting the carcass of their precious shipmate out of my fingers. They had rather a job to separate us, I've been told. A sufficiently fierce story to make an old judge and a respectable jury sit up a bit. The first thing I heard when I came to myself was the maddening howling of that endless gale, and on that the voice of the old man. He was hanging on to my bunk, staring into my face out of his sou'wester.

"'Mr. Leggatt, you have killed a man. You can act no longer as chief mate of this ship.'"

His care to subdue his voice made it sound monotonous. He rested a hand on the end of the skylight to steady himself with, and all that time did not stir a limb, so far as I could see. "Nice little tale for a quiet tea-party," he concluded in the same tone.

One of my hands, too, rested on the end of the skylight; neither did I stir a limb, so far as I knew. We stood less than a foot from each other. It occurred to me that if old "Bless my soul—you don't say so" were to put his head up the companion and catch sight of us, he would think he was seeing double, or imagine himself come upon a scene of weird witchcraft; the strange captain having a quiet confabulation by the wheel with his own grey ghost. I became very much concerned to prevent anything of the sort. I heard the other's soothing undertone.

"My father's a parson in Norfolk," it said. Evidently he had forgotten he had told me this important fact before. Truly a nice little tale.

"You had better slip down into my stateroom now," I said, moving off stealthily. My double followed my movements; our bare feet made no sound; I let him in, closed the door with care, and, after giving a call to the second mate, returned on deck for my relief.

"Not much sign of any wind yet," I remarked when he approached.

"No, sir. Not much," he assented, sleepily, in his hoarse voice, with just enough deference, no more, and barely suppressing a yawn.

"Well, that's all you have to look out for. You have got your orders."

"Yes, sir."

I paced a turn or two on the poop and saw him take up his position face forward with his elbow in the ratlines of the mizzen-rigging before I went below. The mate's faint snoring was still going on peacefully. The cuddy lamp was burning over the table on which stood a vase with flowers, a polite attention from the ship's provision merchant—the last flowers we should see for the next three months at the very least. Two bunches of bananas hung from the beam symmetrically, one on each side of the rudder-casing. Everything was as before in the ship—except that two of her captain's sleeping-suits were simultaneously in use, one motionless in the cuddy, the other keeping very still in the captain's stateroom.

It must be explained here that my cabin had the form of the capital letter L, the door being within the angle and opening into the short part of the letter. A couch was to the left, the bed-place to the right; my

writing-desk and the chronometers' table faced the door. But any one opening it, unless he stepped right inside, had no view of what I call the long (or vertical) part of the letter. It contained some lockers surmounted by a bookcase; and a few clothes, a thick jacket or two, caps, oilskin coat, and such like, hung on hooks. There was at the bottom of that part a door opening into my bathroom, which could be entered also directly from the saloon. But that way was never used.

The mysterious arrival had discovered the advantage of this particular shape. Entering my room, lighted strongly by a big bulkhead lamp swung on gimbals above my writing-desk, I did not see him anywhere till he stepped out quietly from behind the coats hung in the recessed part.

"I heard somebody moving about, and went in there at once," he whispered.

I, too, spoke under my breath.

"Nobody is likely to come in here without knocking and getting permission."

He nodded. His face was thin and the sunburn faded, as though he had been ill. And no wonder. He had been, I heard presently, kept under arrest in his cabin for nearly seven weeks. But there was nothing sickly in his eyes or in his expression. He was not a bit like me, really; yet, as we stood leaning over my bed-place, whispering side by side, with our dark heads together and our backs to the door, anybody bold enough to open it stealthily would have been treated to the uncanny sight of a double captain busy talking in whispers with his other self.

"But all this doesn't tell me how you came to hang on to our side-ladder," I inquired, in the hardly audible

murmurs we used, after he had told me something more of the proceedings on board the *Sephora* once the bad weather was over.

"When we sighted Java Head I had had time to think all those matters out several times over. I had six weeks of doing nothing else, and with only an hour or so every evening for a tramp on the quarter-deck."

He whispered, his arms folded on the side of my bed-place, staring through the open port. And I could imagine perfectly the manner of this thinking out—a stubborn if not a steadfast operation; something of which I should have been perfectly incapable.

"I reckoned it would be dark before we closed with the land," he continued, so low that I had to strain my hearing, near as we were to each other, shoulder touching shoulder almost. "So I asked to speak to the old man. He always seemed very sick when he came to see me—as if he could not look me in the face. You know, that foresail saved the ship. She was too deep to have run long under bare poles. And it was I that managed to set it for him. Anyway, he came. When I had him in my cabin—he stood by the door looking at me as if I had the halter round my neck already—I asked him right away to leave my cabin door unlocked at night while the ship was going through Sunda Straits. There would be the Java coast within two or three miles, off Angier Point. I wanted nothing more. I've had a prize for swimming my second year in the Conway."

"I can believe it," I breathed out.

"God only knows why they locked me in every night. To see some of their faces you'd have thought they were afraid I'd go about at night strangling people. Am I a murdering brute? Do I look it? By Jove!

if I had been he wouldn't have trusted himself like that into my room. You'll say I might have chucked him aside and bolted out, there and then—it was dark already. Well, no. And for the same reason I wouldn't think of trying to smash the door. There would have been a rush to stop me at the noise, and I did not mean to get into a confounded scrimmage. Somebody else might have got killed—for I would not have broken out only to get chucked back, and I did not want any more of that work. He refused, looking more sick than ever. He was afraid of the men, and also of that old second mate of his who had been sailing with him for years—a grey-headed old humbug; and his steward, too, had been with him devil knows how long—seventeen years or more—a dogmatic sort of loafer who hated me like poison, just because I was the chief mate. No chief mate ever made more than one voyage in the *Sephora*, you know. Those two old chaps ran the ship. Devil only knows what the skipper wasn't afraid of (all his nerve went to pieces altogether in that hellish spell of bad weather we had)—of what the law would do to him—of his wife, perhaps. Oh, yes! she's on board. Though I don't think she would have meddled. She would have been only too glad to have me out of the ship in any way. The 'brand of Cain' business, don't you see. That's all right. I was ready enough to go off wandering on the face of the earth—and that was price enough to pay for an Abel of that sort. Anyhow, he wouldn't listen to me. 'This thing must take its course. I represent the law here.' He was shaking like a leaf. 'So you won't?' 'No!' 'Then I hope you will be able to sleep on that,' I said, and turned my back on him. 'I wonder that *you* can,' cries he, and locks the door.

"Well, after that, I couldn't. Not very well. That was three weeks ago. We have had a slow passage

through the Java Sea; drifted about Carimata for ten days. When we anchored here they thought, I suppose, it was all right. The nearest land (and that's five miles) is the ship's destination; the consul would soon set about catching me; and there would have been no object in bolting to these islets there. I don't suppose there's a drop of water on them. I don't know how it was, but to-night that steward, after bringing me my supper, went out to let me eat it, and left the door unlocked. And I ate it—all there was, too. After I had finished I strolled out on the quarter-deck. I don't know that I meant to do anything. A breath of fresh air was all I wanted, I believe. Then a sudden temptation came over me. I kicked off my slippers and was in the water before I had made up my mind fairly. Somebody heard the splash and they raised an awful hullabaloo. 'He's gone! Lower the boats! He's committed suicide! No, he's swimming.' Certainly I was swimming. It's not so easy for a swimmer like me to commit suicide by drowning. I landed on the nearest islet before the boat left the ship's side. I heard them pulling about in the dark, hailing, and so on, but after a bit they gave up. Everything quieted down and the anchorage became as still as death. I sat down on a stone and began to think. I felt certain they would start searching for me at daylight. There was no place to hide on those stony things—and if there had been, what would have been the good? But now I was clear of that ship, I was not going back. So after a while I took off all my clothes, tied them up in a bundle with a stone inside, and dropped them in the deep water on the outer side of that islet. That was suicide enough for me. Let them think what they liked, but I didn't mean to drown myself. I meant to swim

till I sank—but that's not the same thing. I struck out for another of these little islands, and it was from that one that I first saw your riding-light. Something to swim for. I went on easily, and on the way I came upon a flat rock a foot or two above water. In the daytime, I dare say, you might make it out with a glass from your poop. I scrambled up on it and rested myself for a bit. Then I made another start. That last spell must have been over a mile."

His whisper was getting fainter and fainter, and all the time he stared straight out through the port-hole, in which there was not even a star to be seen. I had not interrupted him. There was something that made comment impossible in his narrative, or perhaps in himself; a sort of feeling, a quality, which I can't find a name for. And when he ceased, all I found was a futile whisper: "So you swam for our light?"

"Yes—straight for it. It was something to swim for. I couldn't see any stars low down because the coast was in the way, and I couldn't see the land, either. The water was like glass. One might have been swimming in a confounded thousand-feet deep cistern with no place for scrambling out anywhere; but what I didn't like was the notion of swimming round and round like a crazed bullock before I gave out; and as I didn't mean to go back . . . No. Do you see me being hauled back, stark naked, off one of these little islands by the scruff of the neck and fighting like a wild beast? Somebody would have got killed for certain, and I did not want any of that. So I went on. Then your ladder—"

"Why didn't you hail the ship?" I asked, a little louder.

He touched my shoulder lightly. Lazy footsteps

came right over our heads and stopped. The second mate had crossed from the other side of the poop and might have been hanging over the rail, for all we knew.

"He couldn't hear us talking—could he?" My double breathed into my very ear, anxiously.

His anxiety was an answer, a sufficient answer, to the question I had put to him. An answer containing all the difficulty of that situation. I closed the port-hole quietly, to make sure. A louder word might have been overheard.

"Who's that?" he whispered then.

"My second mate. But I don't know much more of the fellow than you do."

And I told him a little about myself. I had been appointed to take charge while I least expected anything of the sort, not quite a fortnight ago. I didn't know either the ship or the people. Hadn't had the time in port to look about me or size anybody up. And as to the crew, all they knew was that I was appointed to take the ship home. For the rest, I was almost as much of a stranger on board as himself, I said. And at the moment I felt it most acutely. I felt that it would take very little to make me a suspect person in the eyes of the ship's company.

He had turned about meantime; and we, the two strangers in the ship, faced each other in identical attitudes.

"Your ladder—" he murmured, after a silence. "Who'd have thought of finding a ladder hanging over at night in a ship anchored out here! I felt just then a very unpleasant faintness. After the life I've been leading for nine weeks, anybody would have got out of condition. I wasn't capable of swimming round as far as your rudder-chains. And, lo and behold! there was a

ladder to get hold of. After I gripped it I said to myself, 'What's the good?' When I saw a man's head looking over I thought I would swim away presently and leave him shouting—in whatever language it was. I didn't mind being looked at. I—I liked it. And then you speaking to me so quietly—as if you had expected me—made me hold on a little longer. It had been a confounded lonely time—I don't mean while swimming. I was glad to talk a little to somebody that didn't belong to the *Sephora*. As to asking for the captain, that was a mere impulse. It could have been no use, with all the ship knowing about me and the other people pretty certain to be round here in the morning. I don't know—I wanted to be seen, to talk with somebody, before I went on. I don't know what I would have said. . . . 'Fine night, isn't it?' or something of the sort."

"Do you think they will be round here presently?" I asked with some incredulity.

"Quite likely," he said, faintly.

He looked extremely haggard all of a sudden. His head rolled on his shoulders.

"H'm. We shall see then. Meantime get into that bed," I whispered. "Want help? There."

It was a rather high bed-place with a set of drawers underneath. This amazing swimmer really needed the lift I gave him by seizing his leg. He tumbled in, rolled over on his back, and flung one arm across his eyes. And then, with his face nearly hidden, he must have looked exactly as I used to look in that bed. I gazed upon my other self for a while before drawing across carefully the two green serge curtains which ran on a brass rod. I thought for a moment of pinning them together for greater safety, but I sat down on the couch, and once there I felt unwilling to rise and

hunt for a pin. I would do it in a moment. I was extremely tired, in a peculiarly intimate way, by the strain of stealthiness, by the effort of whispering and the general secrecy of this excitement. It was three o'clock by now and I had been on my feet since nine, but I was not sleepy; I could not have gone to sleep. I sat there, fagged out, looking at the curtains, trying to clear my mind of the confused sensation of being in two places at once, and greatly bothered by an exasperating knocking in my head. It was a relief to discover suddenly that it was not in my head at all, but on the outside of the door. Before I could collect myself the words "Come in" were out of my mouth, and the steward entered with a tray, bringing in my morning coffee. I had slept, after all, and I was so frightened that I shouted, "This way! I am here, steward," as though he had been miles away. He put down the tray on the table next the couch and only then said, very quietly, "I can see you are here, sir." I felt him give me a keen look, but I dared not meet his eyes just then. He must have wondered why I had drawn the curtains of my bed before going to sleep on the couch. He went out, hooking the door open as usual.

I heard the crew washing decks above me. I knew I would have been told at once if there had been any wind. Calm, I thought, and I was doubly vexed. Indeed, I felt dual more than ever. The steward reappeared suddenly in the doorway. I jumped up from the couch so quickly that he gave a start.

"What do you want here?"

"Close your port, sir—they are washing decks."

"It is closed," I said, reddening.

"Very well, sir." But he did not move from the doorway and returned my stare in an extraordinary,

equivocal manner for a time. Then his eyes wavered, all his expression changed, and in a voice unusually gentle, almost coaxingly:

"May I come in to take the empty cup away, sir?"

"Of course!" I turned my back on him while he popped in and out. Then I unhooked and closed the door and even pushed the bolt. This sort of thing could not go on very long. The cabin was as hot as an oven, too. I took a peep at my double, and discovered that he had not moved, his arm was still over his eyes; but his chest heaved; his hair was wet; his chin glistened with perspiration. I reached over him and opened the port.

"I must show myself on deck," I reflected.

Of course, theoretically, I could do what I liked, with no one to say nay to me within the whole circle of the horizon; but to lock my cabin door and take the key away I did not dare. Directly I put my head out of the companion I saw the group of my two officers, the second mate barefooted, the chief mate in long india-rubber boots, near the break of the poop, and the steward half-way down the poop-ladder talking to them eagerly. He happened to catch sight of me and dived, the second ran down on the main-deck shouting some order or other, and the chief mate came to meet me, touching his cap.

There was a sort of curiosity in his eye that I did not like. I don't know whether the steward had told them that I was "queer" only, or downright drunk, but I know the man meant to have a good look at me. I watched him coming with a smile which, as he got into point-blank range, took effect and froze his very whiskers. I did not give him time to open his lips.

"Square the yards by lifts and braces before the hands go to breakfast."

It was the first particular order I had given on board that ship; and I stayed on deck to see it executed, too. I had felt the need of asserting myself without loss of time. That sneering young cub got taken down a peg or two on that occasion, and I also seized the opportunity of having a good look at the face of every foremast man as they filed past me to go to the after braces. At breakfast time, eating nothing myself, I presided with such frigid dignity that the two mates were only too glad to escape from the cabin as soon as decency permitted; and all the time the dual working of my mind distracted me almost to the point of insanity. I was constantly watching myself, my secret self, as dependent on my actions as my own personality, sleeping in that bed, behind that door which faced me as I sat at the head of the table. It was very much like being mad, only it was worse because one was aware of it.

I had to shake him for a solid minute, but when at last he opened his eyes it was in the full possession of his senses, with an inquiring look.

"All's well so far," I whispered. "Now you must vanish into the bathroom."

He did so, as noiseless as a ghost, and I then rang for the steward, and facing him boldly, directed him to tidy up my stateroom while I was having my bath—"and be quick about it." As my tone admitted of no excuses, he said, "Yes, sir," and ran off to fetch his dust-pan and brushes. I took a bath and did most of my dressing, splashing, and whistling softly for the steward's edification, while the secret sharer of my life stood drawn up bolt upright in that little space, his face looking very sunken in daylight, his eyelids lowered under the stern, dark line of his eyebrows drawn together by a slight frown.

When I left him there to go back to my room the steward was finishing dusting. I sent for the mate and engaged him in some insignificant conversation. It was, as it were, trifling with the terrific character of his whiskers; but my object was to give him an opportunity for a good look at my cabin. And then I could at last shut, with a clear conscience, the door of my stateroom and get my double back into the recessed part. There was nothing else for it. He had to sit still on a small folding stool, half smothered by the heavy coats hanging there. We listened to the steward going into the bathroom out of the saloon, filling the water-bottles there, scrubbing the bath, setting things to rights, whisk, bang, clatter—out again into the saloon—turn the key—click. Such was my scheme for keeping my second self invisible. Nothing better could be contrived under the circumstances. And there we sat; I at my writing-desk ready to appear busy with some papers, he behind me, out of sight of the door. It would not have been prudent to talk in daytime; and I could not have stood the excitement of that queer sense of whispering to myself. Now and then, glancing over my shoulder, I saw him far back there, sitting rigidly on the low stool, his bare feet close together, his arms folded, his head hanging on his breast—and perfectly still. Anybody would have taken him for me.

I was fascinated by it myself. Every moment I had to glance over my shoulder. I was looking at him when a voice outside the door said:

"Beg pardon, sir."

"Well!" . . . I kept my eyes on him, and so, when the voice outside the door announced, "There's a ship's boat coming our way, sir," I saw him give a start

—the first movement he had made for hours. But he did not raise his bowed head.

"All right. Get the ladder over."

I hesitated. Should I whisper something to him? But what? His immobility seemed to have been never disturbed. What could I tell him he did not know already? . . . Finally I went on deck.

II

The skipper of the *Sephora* had a thin red whisker all round his face, and the sort of complexion that goes with hair of that colour; also the particular, rather smeary shade of blue in the eyes. He was not exactly a showy figure; his shoulders were high, his stature but middling—one leg slightly more bandy than the other. He shook hands, looking vaguely around. A spiritless tenacity was his main characteristic, I judged. I behaved with a politeness which seemed to disconcert him. Perhaps he was shy. He mumbled to me as if he were ashamed of what he was saying; gave his name (it was something like Archbold—but at this distance of years I hardly am sure), his ship's name, and a few other particulars of that sort, in the manner of a criminal making a reluctant and doleful confession. He had had terrible weather on the passage out—terrible—terrible—wife aboard, too.

By this time we were seated in the cabin and the steward brought in a tray with a bottle and glasses. "Thanks! No." Never took liquor. Would have some water, though. He drank two tumblerfuls. Terrible thirsty work. Ever since daylight had been exploring the islands round his ship.

"What was that for—fun?" I asked, with an appearance of polite interest.

"No!" He sighed. "Painful duty."

As he persisted in his mumbling and I wanted my double to hear every word, I hit upon the notion of informing him that I regretted to say I was hard of hearing.

"Such a young man, too!" he nodded, keeping his smeary blue, unintelligent eyes fastened upon me. What was the cause of it—some disease? he inquired, without the least sympathy and as if he thought that, if so, I'd got no more than I deserved.

"Yes; disease," I admitted in a cheerful tone which seemed to shock him. But my point was gained, because he had to raise his voice to give me his tale. It is not worth while to record that version. It was just over two months since all this had happened, and he had thought so much about it that he seemed completely muddled as to its bearings, but still immensely impressed.

"What would you think of such a thing happening on board your own ship? I've had the *Sephora* for these fifteen years. I am a well-known shipmaster."

He was densely distressed—and perhaps I should have sympathized with him if I had been able to detach my mental vision from the unsuspected sharer of my cabin as though he were my second self. There he was on the other side of the bulkhead, four or five feet from us, no more, as we sat in the saloon. I looked politely at Captain Archbold (if that was his name), but it was the other I saw, in a grey sleeping-suit, seated on a low stool, his bare feet close together, his arms folded, and every word said between us falling into the ears of his dark head bowed on his chest.

"I have been at sea now, man and boy, for seven-and-thirty years, and I've never heard of such a thing

happening in an English ship. And that it should be my ship. Wife on board, too."

I was hardly listening to him.

"Don't you think," I said, "that the heavy sea which, you told me, came aboard just then might have killed the man? I have seen the sheer weight of a sea kill a man very neatly, by simply breaking his neck."

"Good God!" he uttered, impressively, fixing his smeary blue eyes on me. "The sea! No man killed by the sea ever looked like that." He seemed positively scandalized at my suggestion. And as I gazed at him, certainly not prepared for anything original on his part, he advanced his head close to mine and thrust his tongue out at me so suddenly that I couldn't help starting back.

After scoring over my calmness in this graphic way he nodded wisely. If I had seen the sight, he assured me, I would never forget it as long as I lived. The weather was too bad to give the corpse a proper sea burial. So next day at dawn they took it up on the poop, covering its face with a bit of bunting; he read a short prayer, and then, just as it was, in its oilskins and long boots, they launched it amongst those mountainous seas that seemed ready every moment to swallow up the ship herself and the terrified lives on board of her.

"That reefed foresail saved you," I threw in.

"Under God—it did," he exclaimed fervently. "It was by a special mercy, I firmly believe, that it stood some of those hurricane squalls."

"It was the setting of that sail which—" I began.

"God's own hand in it," he interrupted me. "Nothing less could have done it. I don't mind telling you that I hardly dared give the order. It seemed

impossible that we could touch anything without losing it, and then our last hope would have been gone."

The terror of that gale was on him yet. I let him go on for a bit, then said, casually—as if returning to a minor subject:

"You were very anxious to give up your mate to the shore people, I believe?"

He was. To the Law. His obscure tenacity on that point had in it something incomprehensible and a little awful; something, as it were, mystical, quite apart from his anxiety that he should not be suspected of "countenancing any doings of that sort." Seven-and-thirty virtuous years at sea, of which over twenty of immaculate command, and the last fifteen in the *Sephora*, seemed to have laid him under some pitiless obligation.

"And, you know," he went on, groping shamefacedly amongst his feelings, "I did not engage that young fellow. His people had some interest with my owners. I was in a way forced to take him on. He looked very smart, very gentlemanly, and all that. But do you know—I never liked him, somehow. I am a plain man. You see, he wasn't exactly the sort for the chief mate of a ship like the *Sephora*."

I had become so connected in thoughts and impressions with the secret sharer of my cabin that I felt as if I, personally, were being given to understand that I, too, was not the sort that would have done for the chief mate of a ship like the *Sephora*. I had no doubt of it in my mind.

"Not at all the style of man. You understand," he insisted, superfluously, looking hard at me.

I smiled urbanely. He seemed at a loss for a while.

"I suppose I must report a suicide."

"Beg pardon?"

"Sui-cide! That's what I'll have to write to my owners directly I get in."

"Unless you manage to recover him before to-morrow," I assented, dispassionately. . . . "I mean, alive."

He mumbled something which I really did not catch, and I turned my ear to him in a puzzled manner. He fairly bawled:

"The land—I say, the mainland is at least seven miles off my anchorage."

"About that."

My lack of excitement, of curiosity, of surprise, of any sort of pronounced interest, began to arouse his distrust. But except for the felicitous pretence of deafness I had not tried to pretend anything. I had felt utterly incapable of playing the part of ignorance properly, and therefore was afraid to try. It is also certain that he had brought some ready-made suspicions with him, and that he viewed my politeness as a strange and unnatural phenomenon. And yet how else could I have received him? Not heartily! That was impossible for psychological reasons, which I need not state here. My only object was to keep off his inquiries. Surlily? Yes, but surliness might have provoked a point-blank question. From its novelty to him and from its nature, punctilious courtesy was the manner best calculated to restrain the man. But there was the danger of his breaking through my defence bluntly. I could not, I think, have met him by a direct lie, also for psychological (not moral) reasons. If he had only known how afraid I was of his putting my feeling of identity with the other to the test! But, strangely enough—(I thought of it only afterward)—I believe that he was not a little disconcerted

by the reverse side of that weird situation, by something in me that reminded him of the man he was seeking—suggested a mysterious similitude to the young fellow he had distrusted and disliked from the first.

However that might have been, the silence was not very prolonged. He took another oblique step.

"I reckon I had no more than a two-mile pull to your ship. Not a bit more."

"And quite enough, too, in this awful heat," I said.

Another pause, full of mistrust, followed. Necessity, they say, is mother of invention, but fear, too, is not barren of ingenious suggestions. And I was afraid he would ask me point-blank for news of my other self.

"Nice little saloon, isn't it?" I remarked, as if noticing for the first time the way his eyes roamed from one closed door to the other. "And very well fitted out, too. Here, for instance," I continued, reaching over the back of my seat negligently and flinging the door open, "is my bathroom."

He made an eager movement, but hardly gave it a glance. I got up, shut the door of the bathroom, and invited him to have a look round, as if I were very proud of my accommodation. He had to rise and be shown round, but he went through the business without any raptures whatever.

"And now we'll have a look at my stateroom," I declared, in a voice as loud as I dared to make it, crossing the cabin to the starboard side with purposely heavy steps.

He followed me in and gazed around. My intelligent double had vanished. I played my part.

"Very convenient—isn't it?"

"Very nice. Very comf . . ." He didn't finish, and went out brusquely as if to escape from some un-

righteous wiles of mine. But it was not to be. I had been too frightened not to feel vengeful; I felt I had him on the run, and I meant to keep him on the run. My polite insistence must have had something menacing in it, because he gave in suddenly. And I did not let him off a single item; mate's room, pantry, storerooms, the very sail-locker—which was also under the poop—he had to look into them all. When at last I showed him out on the quarter-deck he drew a long, spiritless sigh, and mumbled dismally that he must really be going back to his ship now. I desired my mate, who had joined us, to see to the captain's boat.

The man of whiskers gave a blast on the whistle which he used to wear hanging round his neck, and yelled, "*Sephoras* away!" My double down there in my cabin must have heard, and certainly could not feel more relieved than I. Four fellows came running out from somewhere forward and went over the side, while my own men, appearing on deck, too, lined the rail. I escorted my visitor to the gangway ceremoniously, and nearly overdid it. He was a tenacious beast. On the very ladder he lingered, and in that unique, guiltily conscientious manner of sticking to the point:

"I say . . . you . . . you don't think that—"

I covered his voice loudly:

"Certainly not. . . . I am delighted. Good-bye."

I had an idea of what he meant to say, and just saved myself by the privilege of defective hearing. He was too shaken generally to insist, but my mate, close witness of that parting, looked mystified and his face took on a thoughtful cast. As I did not want to appear as if I wished to avoid all communication with my officers, he had the opportunity to address me.

"Seems a very nice man. His boat's crew told our

chaps a very extraordinary story, if what I am told by the steward is true. I suppose you had it from the captain, sir?"

"Yes, I had a story from the captain."

"A very horrible affair—isn't it, sir?"

"It is."

"Beats all these tales we hear about murders in Yankee ships."

"I don't think it beats them. I don't think it resembles them in the least."

"Bless my soul—you don't say so! But, of course, I've no acquaintance whatever with American ships, not I, so I couldn't go against your knowledge. It's horrible enough for me. . . . But the queerest part is that those fellows seemed to have some idea the man was hidden aboard here. They had really. Did you ever hear of such a thing?"

"Preposterous—isn't it?"

We were walking to and fro athwart the quarter-deck. No one of the crew forward could be seen (the day was Sunday), and the mate pursued:

"There was some little dispute about it. Our chaps took offence. 'As if we would harbour a thing like that,' they said. 'Wouldn't you like to look for him in our coal-hole?' Quite a tiff. But they made it up in the end. I suppose he did drown himself. Don't you, sir?"

"I don't suppose anything."

"You have no doubt in the matter, sir?"

"None whatever."

I left him suddenly. I felt I was producing a bad impression, but with my double down there it was most trying to be on deck. And it was almost as trying to be below. Altogether a nerve-trying situation. But

on the whole I felt less torn in two when I was with him. There was no one in the whole ship whom I dared take into my confidence. Since the hands had got to know his story, it would have been impossible to pass him off for any one else, and an accidental discovery was to be dreaded now more than ever. . . .

The steward being engaged in laying the table for dinner, we could talk only with our eyes when I first went down. Later in the afternoon we had a cautious try at whispering. The Sunday quietness of the ship was against us; the stillness of air and water around her was against us; the elements, the men were against us—everything was against us in our secret partnership; time itself—for this could not go on forever. The very trust in Providence was, I suppose, denied to his guilt. Shall I confess that this thought cast me down very much? And as to the chapter of accidents which counts for so much in the book of success, I could only hope that it was closed. For what favourable accident could be expected?

"Did you hear everything?" were my first words as soon as we took up our position side by side, leaning over my bed-place.

He had. And the proof of it was his earnest whisper, "The man told you he hardly dared to give the order."

I understood the reference to be to that saving foresail.

"Yes. He was afraid of it being lost in the setting."

"I assure you he never gave the order. He may think he did, but he never gave it. He stood there with me on the break of the poop after the maintopsail blew away, and whimpered about our last hope—positively whimpered about it and nothing else—and the night coming on! To hear one's skipper go on like that in such weather was enough to drive any fellow out of his

mind. It worked me up into a sort of desperation. I just took it into my own hands and went away from him, boiling, and— But what's the use telling you? *You* know! . . . Do you think that if I had not been pretty fierce with them I should have got the men to do anything? Not it! The bo's'n perhaps? Perhaps! It wasn't a heavy sea—it was a sea gone mad! I suppose the end of the world will be something like that; and a man may have the heart to see it coming once and be done with it—but to have to face it day after day— I don't blame anybody. I was precious little better than the rest. Only—I was an officer of that old coal-wagon, anyhow—"

"I quite understand," I conveyed that sincere assurance into his ear. He was out of breath with whispering; I could hear him pant slightly. It was all very simple. The same strung-up force which had given twenty-four men a chance, at least, for their lives, had, in a sort of recoil, crushed an unworthy mutinous existence.

But I had no leisure to weigh the merits of the matter —footsteps in the saloon, a heavy knock. "There's enough wind to get under way with, sir." Here was the call of a new claim upon my thoughts and even upon my feelings.

"Turn the hands up," I cried through the door. "I'll be on deck directly."

I was going out to make the acquaintance of my ship. Before I left the cabin our eyes met—the eyes of the only two strangers on board. I pointed to the recessed part where the little camp-stool awaited him and laid my finger on my lips. He made a gesture—somewhat vague—a little mysterious, accompanied by a faint smile, as if of regret.

This is not the place to enlarge upon the sensations of a man who feels for the first time a ship move under his feet to his own independent word. In my case they were not unalloyed. I was not wholly alone with my command; for there was that stranger in my cabin. Or rather, I was not completely and wholly with her. Part of me was absent. That mental feeling of being in two places at once affected me physically as if the mood of secrecy had penetrated my very soul. Before an hour had elapsed since the ship had begun to move, having occasion to ask the mate (he stood by my side) to take a compass bearing of the Pagoda, I caught myself reaching up to his ear in whispers. I say I caught myself, but enough had escaped to startle the man. I can't describe it otherwise than by saying that he shied. A grave, preoccupied manner, as though he were in possession of some perplexing intelligence, did not leave him henceforth. A little later I moved away from the rail to look at the compass with such a stealthy gait that the helmsman noticed it—and I could not help noticing the unusual roundness of his eyes. These are trifling instances, though it's to no commander's advantage to be suspected of ludicrous eccentricities. But I was also more seriously affected. There are to a seaman certain words, gestures, that should in given conditions come as naturally, as instinctively as the winking of a menaced eye. A certain order should spring to his lips without thinking; a certain sign should get itself made, so to speak, without reflection. But all unconscious alertness had abandoned me. I had to make an effort of will to recall myself (from the cabin) to the conditions of the moment. I felt that I was appearing an irresolute commander to those people who were watching me more or less critically.

And, besides, there were the scares. On the second day out, for instance, coming off the deck in the afternoon (I had straw slippers on my bare feet) I stopped at the open pantry door and spoke to the steward. He was doing something there with his back to me. At the sound of my voice he nearly jumped out of his skin, as the saying is, and incidentally broke a cup.

"What on earth's the matter with you?" I asked, astonished.

He was extremely confused. "Beg your pardon, sir. I made sure you were in your cabin."

"You see I wasn't."

"No, sir. I could have sworn I had heard you moving in there not a moment ago. It's most extraordinary . . . very sorry, sir."

I passed on with an inward shudder. I was so identified with my secret double that I did not even mention the fact in those scanty, fearful whispers we exchanged. I suppose he had made some slight noise of some kind or other. It would have been miraculous if he hadn't at one time or another. And yet, haggard as he appeared, he looked always perfectly self-controlled, more than calm—almost invulnerable. On my suggestion he remained almost entirely in the bathroom, which, upon the whole, was the safest place. There could be really no shadow of an excuse for any one ever wanting to go in there, once the steward had done with it. It was a very tiny place. Sometimes he reclined on the floor, his legs bent, his head sustained on one elbow. At others I would find him on the campstool, sitting in his grey sleeping-suit and with his cropped dark hair like a patient, unmoved convict. At night I would smuggle him into my bed-place, and we would whisper together, with the regular footfalls of the

officer of the watch passing and repassing over our heads. It was an infinitely miserable time. It was lucky that some tins of fine preserves were stowed in a locker in my stateroom; hard bread I could always get hold of; and so he lived on stewed chicken, paté de foie gras, asparagus, cooked oysters, sardines—on all sorts of abominable sham delicacies out of tins. My early morning coffee he always drank; and it was all I dared do for him in that respect.

Every day there was the horrible manœuvring to go through so that my room and then the bathroom should be done in the usual way. I came to hate the sight of the steward, to abhor the voice of that harmless man. I felt that it was he who would bring on the disaster of discovery. It hung like a sword over our heads.

The fourth day out, I think (we were then working down the east side of the Gulf of Siam, tack for tack, in light winds and smooth water)—the fourth day, I say, of this miserable juggling with the unavoidable, as we sat at our evening meal, that man, whose slightest movement I dreaded, after putting down the dishes, ran up on deck busily. This could not be dangerous. Presently he came down again; and then it appeared that he had remembered a coat of mine which I had thrown over a rail to dry after having been wetted in a shower which had passed over the ship in the afternoon. Sitting stolidly at the head of the table, I became terrified at the sight of the garment on his arm. Of course he made for my door. There was no time to lose.

"Steward," I thundered. My nerves were so shaken that I could not govern my voice and conceal my agitation. This was the sort of thing that made my terrifically whiskered mate tap his forehead with his forefinger. I

had detected him using that gesture while talking on deck with a confidential air to the carpenter. It was too far to hear a word, but I had no doubt that this pantomime could only refer to the strange new captain.

"Yes, sir," the pale-faced steward turned resignedly to me. It was this maddening course of being shouted at, checked without rhyme or reason, arbitrarily chased out of my cabin, suddenly called into it, sent flying out of his pantry on incomprehensible errands, that accounted for the growing wretchedness of his expression.

"Where are you going with that coat?"

"To your room, sir."

"Is there another shower coming?"

"I'm sure I don't know, sir. Shall I go up again and see, sir?"

"No! never mind."

My object was attained, as, of course, my other self in there would have heard everything that passed. During this interlude my two officers never raised their eyes off their respective plates; but the lip of that confounded cub, the second mate, quivered visibly.

I expected the steward to hook my coat on and come out at once. He was very slow about it; but I dominated my nervousness sufficiently not to shout after him. Suddenly I became aware (it could be heard plainly enough) that the fellow for some reason or other was opening the door of the bathroom. It was the end. The place was literally not big enough to swing a cat in. My voice died in my throat and I went stony all over. I expected to hear a yell of surprise and terror, and made a movement, but had not the strength to get on my legs. Everything remained still. Had my second self taken the poor wretch by the throat? I don't know what I

would have done next moment if I had not seen the steward come out of my room, close the door, and then stand quietly by the sideboard.

"Saved," I thought. "But, no! Lost! Gone! He was gone!"

I laid my knife and fork down and leaned back in my chair. My head swam. After a while, when sufficiently recovered to speak in a steady voice, I instructed my mate to put the ship round at eight o'clock himself.

"I won't come on deck," I went on. "I think I'll turn in, and unless the wind shifts I don't want to be disturbed before midnight. I feel a bit seedy."

"You did look middling bad a little while ago," the chief mate remarked without showing any great concern.

They both went out, and I stared at the steward clearing the table. There was nothing to be read on that wretched man's face. But why did he avoid my eyes, I asked myself. Then I thought I should like to hear the sound of his voice.

"Steward!"

"Sir!" Startled as usual.

"Where did you hang up that coat?"

"In the bathroom, sir." The usual anxious tone. "It's not quite dry yet, sir."

For some time longer I sat in the cuddy. Had my double vanished as he had come? But of his coming there was an explanation, whereas his disappearance would be inexplicable. . . . I went slowly into my dark room, shut the door, lighted the lamp, and for a time dared not turn round. When at last I did I saw him standing bolt-upright in the narrow recessed part. It would not be true to say I had a shock, but an irresistible doubt of his bodily existence flitted through my

mind. Can it be, I asked myself, that he is not visible to other eyes than mine? It was like being haunted. Motionless, with a grave face, he raised his hands slightly at me in a gesture which meant clearly, "Heavens! what a narrow escape!" Narrow indeed. I think I had come creeping quietly as near insanity as any man who has not actually gone over the border. That gesture restrained me, so to speak.

The mate with the terrific whiskers was now putting the ship on the other tack. In the moment of profound silence which follows upon the hands going to their stations, I heard on the poop his raised voice: "Hard alee!" and the distant shout of the order repeated on the maindeck. The sails, in that light breeze, made but a faint fluttering noise. It ceased. The ship was coming round slowly; I held my breath in the renewed stillness of expectation; one wouldn't have thought that there was a single living soul on her decks. A sudden brisk shout, "Mainsail haul!" broke the spell, and in the noisy cries and rush overhead of the men running away with the main-brace we two, down in my cabin, came together in our usual position by the bed-place.

He did not wait for my question. "I heard him fumbling here and just managed to squat myself down in the bath," he whispered to me. "The fellow only opened the door and put his arm in to hang the coat up. All the same—"

"I never thought of that," I whispered back, even more appalled than before at the closeness of the shave, and marvelling at that something unyielding in his character which was carrying him through so finely. There was no agitation in his whisper. Whoever was

being driven distracted, it was not he. He was sane. And the proof of his sanity was continued when he took up the whispering again.

"It would never do for me to come to life again."

It was something that a ghost might have said. But what he was alluding to was his old captain's reluctant admission of the theory of suicide. It would obviously serve his turn—if I had understood at all the view which seemed to govern the unalterable purpose of his action.

"You must maroon me as soon as ever you can get amongst these islands off the Cambodje shore," he went on.

"Maroon you! We are not living in a boy's adventure tale," I protested. His scornful whispering took me up.

"We aren't indeed! There's nothing of a boy's tale in this. But there's nothing else for it. I want no more. You don't suppose I am afraid of what can be done to me? Prison or gallows or whatever they may please. But you don't see me coming back to explain such things to an old fellow in a wig and twelve respectable tradesmen, do you? What can they know whether I am guilty or not—or of *what* I am guilty, either? That's my affair. What does the Bible say? 'Driven off the face of the earth.' Very well. I am off the face of the earth now. As I came at night so I shall go."

"Impossible!" I murmured. "You can't."

"Can't? . . . Not naked like a soul on the Day of Judgment. I shall freeze on to this sleeping-suit. The Last Day is not yet—and . . . you have understood thoroughly. Didn't you?"

I felt suddenly ashamed of myself. I may say truly that I understood—and my hesitation in letting that man swim away from my ship's side had been a mere sham sentiment, a sort of cowardice.

"It can't be done now till next night," I breathed out. "The ship is on the off-shore tack and the wind may fail us."

"As long as I know that you understand," he whispered. "But of course you do. It's a great satisfaction to have got somebody to understand. You seem to have been there on purpose." And in the same whisper, as if we two whenever we talked had to say things to each other which were not fit for the world to hear, he added, "It's very wonderful."

We remained side by side talking in our secret way —but sometimes silent or just exchanging a whispered word or two at long intervals. And as usual he stared through the port. A breath of wind came now and again into our faces. The ship might have been moored in dock, so gently and on an even keel she slipped through the water, that did not murmur even at our passage, shadowy and silent like a phantom sea.

At midnight I went on deck, and to my mate's great surprise put the ship round on the other tack. His terrible whiskers flitted round me in silent criticism. I certainly should not have done it if it had been only a question of getting out of that sleepy gulf as quickly as possible. I believe he told the second mate, who relieved him, that it was a great want of judgment. The other only yawned. That intolerable cub shuffled about so sleepily and lolled against the rails in such a slack, improper fashion that I came down on him sharply.

"Aren't you properly awake yet?"

"Yes, sir! I am awake."

"Well, then, be good enough to hold yourself as if you were. And keep a look-out. If there's any current we'll be closing with some islands before daylight."

The east side of the gulf is fringed with islands, some

solitary, others in groups. On the blue background of the high coast they seem to float on silvery patches of calm water, arid and grey, or dark green and rounded like clumps of evergreen bushes, with the larger ones, a mile or two long, showing the outlines of ridges, ribs of grey rock under the dank mantle of matted leafage. Unknown to trade, to travel, almost to geography, the manner of life they harbour is an unsolved secret. There must be villages—settlements of fishermen at least—on the largest of them, and some communication with the world is probably kept up by native craft. But all that forenoon, as we headed for them, fanned along by the faintest of breezes, I saw no sign of man or canoe in the field of the telescope I kept on pointing at the scattered group.

At noon I gave no order for a change of course, and the mate's whiskers became much concerned and seemed to be offering themselves unduly to my notice. At last I said:

"I am going to stand right in. Quite in—as far as I can take her."

The stare of extreme surprise imparted an air of ferocity also to his eyes, and he looked truly terrific for a moment.

"We're not doing well in the middle of the gulf," I continued, casually. "I am going to look for the land breezes to-night."

"Bless my soul! Do you mean, sir, in the dark amongst the lot of all them islands and reefs and shoals?"

"Well—if there are any regular land breezes at all on this coast one must get close inshore to find them, mustn't one?"

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed again under his breath. All that afternoon he wore a dreamy, con-

templative appearance which in him was a mark of perplexity. After dinner I went into my stateroom as if I meant to take some rest. There we two bent our dark heads over a half-unrolled chart lying on my bed.

"There," I said. "It's got to be Koh-ring. I've been looking at it ever since sunrise. It has got two hills and a low point. It must be inhabited. And on the coast opposite there is what looks like the mouth of a biggish river—with some town, no doubt, not far up. It's the best chance for you that I can see."

"Anything. Koh-ring let it be."

He looked thoughtfully at the chart as if surveying chances and distances from a lofty height—and following with his eyes his own figure wandering on the blank land of Cochin-China, and then passing off that piece of paper clean out of sight into uncharted regions. And it was as if the ship had two captains to plan her course for her. I had been so worried and restless running up and down that I had not had the patience to dress that day. I had remained in my sleeping-suit, with straw slippers and a soft floppy hat. The closeness of the heat in the gulf had been most oppressive, and the crew were used to see me wandering in that airy attire.

"She will clear the south point as she heads now," I whispered into his ear. "Goodness only knows when, though, but certainly after dark. I'll edge her in to half a mile, as far as I may be able to judge in the dark—"

"Be careful," he murmured, warningly—and I realized suddenly that all my future, the only future for which I was fit, would perhaps go irretrievably to pieces in any mishap to my first command.

I could not stop a moment longer in the room. I

motioned him to get out of sight and made my way on the poop. That unplayful cub had the watch. I walked up and down for a while thinking things out, then beckoned him over.

"Send a couple of hands to open the two quarter-deck ports," I said, mildly.

He actually had the impudence, or else so forgot himself in his wonder at such an incomprehensible order, as to repeat:

"Open the quarter-deck ports! What for, sir?"

"The only reason you need concern yourself about is because I tell you to do so. Have them open wide and fastened properly."

He reddened and went off, but I believe made some jeering remark to the carpenter as to the sensible practice of ventilating a ship's quarter-deck. I know he popped into the mate's cabin to impart the fact to him because the whiskers came on deck, as it were by chance, and stole glances at me from below—for signs of lunacy or drunkenness, I suppose.

A little before supper, feeling more restless than ever; I rejoined, for a moment, my second self. And to find him sitting so quietly was surprising, like something against nature, inhuman.

I developed my plan in a hurried whisper.

"I shall stand in as close as I dare and then put her round. I shall presently find means to smuggle you out of here into the sail-locker, which communicates with the lobby. But there is an opening, a sort of square for hauling the sails out, which gives straight on the quarter-deck and which is never closed in fine weather, so as to give air to the sails. When the ship's way is deadened in stays and all the hands are aft at

the main-braces you shall have a clear road to slip out and get overboard through the open quarter-deck port. I've had them both fastened up. Use a rope's end to lower yourself into the water so as to avoid a splash—you know. It could be heard and cause some beastly complication."

He kept silent for a while, then whispered, "I understand."

"I won't be there to see you go," I began with an effort. "The rest . . . I only hope I have understood, too."

"You have. From first to last"—and for the first time there seemed to be a faltering, something strained in his whisper. He caught hold of my arm, but the ringing of the supper bell made me start. He didn't, though; he only released his grip.

After supper I didn't come below again till well past eight o'clock. The faint, steady breeze was loaded with dew; and the wet, darkened sails held all there was of propelling power in it. The night, clear and starry, sparkled darkly, and the opaque, lightless patches shifting slowly against the low stars were the drifting islets. On the port bow there was a big one more distant and shadowily imposing by the great space of sky it eclipsed.

On opening the door I had a back view of my very own self looking at a chart. He had come out of the recess and was standing near the table.

"Quite dark enough," I whispered.

He stepped back and leaned against my bed with a level, quiet glance. I sat on the couch. We had nothing to say to each other. Over our heads the officer of the watch moved here and there. Then I heard him move

quickly. I knew what that meant. He was making for the companion; and presently his voice was outside my door.

"We are drawing in pretty fast, sir. Land looks rather close."

"Very well," I answered. "I am coming on deck directly."

I waited till he was gone out of the cuddy, then rose. My double moved, too. The time had come to exchange our last whispers, for neither of us was ever to hear each other's natural voice.

"Look here!" I opened a drawer and took out three sovereigns. "Take this, anyhow. I've got six and I'd give you the lot, only I must keep a little money to buy some fruit and vegetables for the crew from native boats as we go through Sunda Straits."

He shook his head.

"Take it," I urged him, whispering desperately. "No one can tell what—"

He smiled and slapped meaningly the only pocket of the sleeping-jacket. It was not safe, certainly. But I produced a large old silk handkerchief of mine, and tying the three pieces of gold in a corner, pressed it on him. He was touched, I suppose, because he took it at last and tied it quickly round his waist under the jacket, on his bare skin.

Our eyes met; several seconds elapsed, till, our glances still mingled, I extended my hand and turned the lamp out. Then I passed through the cuddy, leaving the door of my room wide open. . . . "Steward!"

He was still lingering in the pantry in the greatness of his zeal, giving a rub-up to a plated cruet stand the last thing before going to bed. Being careful not to

wake up the mate, whose room was opposite, I spoke in an undertone.

He looked round anxiously. "Sir!"

"Can you get me a little hot water from the galley?"

"I am afraid, sir, the galley fire's been out for some time now."

"Go and see."

He fled up the stairs.

"Now," I whispered, loudly, into the saloon—too loudly, perhaps, but I was afraid I couldn't make a sound. He was by my side in an instant—the double captain slipped past the stairs—through a tiny dark passage . . . a sliding door. We were in the sail-locker, scrambling on our knees over the sails. A sudden thought struck me. I saw myself wandering barefooted, bareheaded, the sun beating on my dark poll. I snatched off my floppy hat and tried hurriedly in the dark to ram it on my other self. He dodged and fended off silently. I wonder what he thought had come to me before he understood and suddenly desisted. Our hands met gropingly, lingered united in a steady, motionless clasp for a second. . . . No word was breathed by either of us when they separated.

I was standing quietly by the pantry door when the steward returned.

"Sorry, sir. Kettle barely warm. Shall I light the spirit-lamp?"

"Never mind."

I came out on deck slowly. It was now a matter of conscience to shave the land as close as possible—for now he must go overboard whenever the ship was put in stays. Must! There could be no going back for him. After a moment I walked over to leeward and

my heart flew into my mouth at the nearness of the land on the bow. Under any other circumstances I would not have held on a minute longer. The second mate had followed me anxiously.

I looked on till I felt I could command my voice.

"She will weather," I said then in a quiet tone.

"Are you going to try that, sir?" he stammered out incredulously.

I took no notice of him and raised my tone just enough to be heard by the helmsman.

"Keep her good full."

"Good full, sir."

The wind fanned my cheek, the sails slept, the world was silent. The strain of watching the dark loom of the land grow bigger and denser was too much for me. I had shut my eyes—because the ship must go closer. She must! The stillness was intolerable. Were we standing still?

When I opened my eyes the second view started my heart with a thump. The black southern hill of Kohring seemed to hang right over the ship like a towering fragment of the everlasting night. On that enormous mass of blackness there was not a gleam to be seen, not a sound to be heard. It was gliding irresistibly toward us and yet seemed already within reach of the hand. I saw the vague figures of the watch grouped in the waist, gazing in awed silence.

"Are you going on, sir," inquired an unsteady voice at my elbow.

I ignored it. I had to go on.

"Keep her full. Don't check her way. That won't do now," I said, warningly.

"I can't see the sails very well," the helmsman answered me, in strange, quavering tones.

Was she close enough? Already she was, I won't say in the shadow of the land, but in the very blackness of it, already swallowed up as it were, gone too close to be recalled, gone from me altogether.

"Give the mate a call," I said to the young man who stood at my elbow as still as death. "And turn all hands up."

My tone had a borrowed loudness reverberated from the height of the land. Several voices cried out together: "We are all on deck, sir."

Then stillness again, with the great shadow gliding closer, towering higher, without a light, without a sound. Such a hush had fallen on the ship that she might have been a bark of the dead floating in slowly under the very gate of Erebus.

"My God! Where are we?"

It was the mate moaning at my elbow. He was thunderstruck, and, as it were, deprived of the moral support of his whiskers. He clapped his hands and absolutely cried out, "Lost!"

"Be quiet," I said, sternly.

He lowered his tone, but I saw the shadowy gesture of his despair. "What are we doing here?"

"Looking for the land wind."

He made as if to tear his hair, and addressed me recklessly.

"She will never get out. You have done it, sir. I knew it'd end in something like this. She will never weather, and you are too close now to stay. She'll drift ashore before she's round. O my God!"

I caught his arm as he was raising it to batter his poor devoted head, and shook it violently.

"She's ashore already," he wailed, trying to tear himself away.

"Is she? . . . Keep good full there!"

"Good full, sir," cried the helmsman in a frightened, thin, child-like voice.

I hadn't let go the mate's arm and went on shaking it. "Ready about, do you hear? You go forward" —shake—"and stop there"—shake—"and hold your noise"—shake—"and see these head-sheets properly overhauled"—shake, shake—shake.

And all the time I dared not look toward the land lest my heart should fail me. I released my grip at last and he ran forward as if fleeing for dear life.

I wondered what my double there in the sail-locker thought of this commotion. He was able to hear everything—and perhaps he was able to understand why, on my conscience, it had to be thus close—no less. My first order, "Hard alee!" re-echoed ominously under the towering shadow of Koh-ring as if I had shouted in a mountain gorge. And then I watched the land intently. In that smooth water and light wind it was impossible to feel the ship coming-to. No! I could not feel her. And my second self was making now ready to slip out and lower himself overboard. Perhaps he was gone already . . . ?

The great black mass brooding over our very mastheads began to pivot away from the ship's side silently. And now I forgot the secret stranger ready to depart, and remembered only that I was a total stranger to the ship. I did not know her. Would she do it? How was she to be handled?

I swung the mainyard and waited helplessly. She was perhaps stopped, and her very fate hung in the balance, with the black mass of Koh-ring like the gate of the everlasting night towering over her taffrail. What would she do now? Had she way on her yet? I stepped

to the side swiftly, and on the shadowy water I could see nothing except a faint phosphorescent flash revealing the glassy smoothness of the sleeping surface. It was impossible to tell—and I had not learned yet the feel of my ship. Was she moving? What I needed was something easily seen, a piece of paper, which I could throw overboard and watch. I had nothing on me. To run down for it I didn't dare. There was no time. All at once my strained, yearning stare distinguished a white object floating within a yard of the ship's side. White on the black water. A phosphorescent flash passed under it. What was that thing? . . . I recognized my own floppy hat. It must have fallen off his head . . . and he didn't bother. Now I had what I wanted—the saving mark for my eyes. But I hardly thought of my other self, now gone from the ship, to be hidden forever from all friendly faces, to be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, with no brand of the curse on his sane forehead to stay a slaying hand . . . too proud to explain.

And I watched the hat—the expression of my sudden pity for his mere flesh. It had been meant to save his homeless head from the dangers of the sun. And now —behold—it was saving the ship, by serving me for a mark to help out the ignorance of my strangeness. Ha! It was drifting forward, warning me just in time that the ship had gathered sternway.

"Shift the helm," I said in a low voice to the seaman standing still like a statue.

The man's eyes glistened wildly in the binnacle light as he jumped round to the other side and spun round the wheel.

I walked to the break of the poop. On the overshadowed deck all hands stood by the forebraces waiting

for my order. The stars ahead seemed to be gliding from right to left. And all was so still in the world that I heard the quiet remark, "She's round," passed in a tone of intense relief between two seamen.

"Let go and haul."

The foreyards ran round with a great noise, amidst cheery cries. And now the frightful whiskers made themselves heard giving various orders. Already the ship was drawing ahead. And I was alone with her. Nothing! no one in the world should stand now between us, throwing a shadow on the way of silent knowledge and mute affection, the perfect communion of a seaman with his first command.

Walking to the taffrail, I was in time to make out, on the very edge of a darkness thrown by a towering black mass like the very gateway of Erebus—yes, I was in time to catch an evanescent glimpse of my white hat left behind to mark the spot where the secret sharer of my cabin and of my thoughts, as though he were my second self, had lowered himself into the water to take his punishment: a free man, a proud swimmer striking out for a new destiny.

—*Joseph Conrad*

From "Twixt Land and Sea"
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GEESE: AN APPRECIATION AND A MEMORY

One November evening, in the neighbourhood of Lyndhurst, I saw a flock of geese marching in a long procession, led, as their custom is, by a majestical gander; they were coming home from their feeding-ground in the forest, and when I spied them were approaching their owner's cottage. Arrived at the wooden gate of the garden in front of the cottage, the leading bird drew up square before it, and with repeated loud screams demanded admittance. Pretty soon, in response to the summons, a man came out of the cottage, walked briskly down the garden path and opened the gate, but only wide enough to put his right leg through; then, placing his foot and knee against the leading bird, he thrust him roughly back; as he did so three young geese pressed forward and were allowed to pass in; then the gate was slammed in the face of the gander and the rest of his followers, and the man went back to the cottage. The gander's indignation was fine to see, though he had most probably experienced the same rude treatment on many occasions. Drawing up to the gate again he called more loudly than before; then deliberately lifted a leg, and placing his broad webbed foot like an open hand against the gate actually tried to push it open! His strength was not sufficient; but he continued to push and to call until the man returned to open the gate and let the birds go in.

It was an amusing scene, and the behaviour of the bird struck me as characteristic. It was this lofty spirit of the goose and strict adhesion to his rights, as well as

his noble appearance and the stately formality and deliberation of his conduct, that caused me very long ago to respect and admire him above all our domestic birds. Doubtless from the æsthetic point of view other domesticated species are his superiors in some things: the mute swan, "floating double," graceful and majestical, with arched neck and ruffled scapulars; the oriental pea-fowl in his glittering mantle; the helmeted guinea-fowl, powdered with stars, and the red cock with his military bearing—a shining Elizabethan knight of the feathered world, singer, lover, and fighter. It is hardly to be doubted that, mentally, the goose is above all these; and to my mind his, too, is the nobler figure; but it is a very familiar figure, and we have not forgotten the reason of its presence among us. He satisfies a material want only too generously, and on this account is too much associated in the mind with mere flavours. We keep a swan or a peacock for ornament; a goose for the table—he is the Michaelmas and Christmas bird. A somewhat similar debasement has fallen on the sheep in Australia. To the man in the bush he is nothing but a tallow-elaborating organism, whose destiny it is to be cast, at maturity, into the melting vat, and whose chief use it is to lubricate the machinery of civilization. It a little shocks, and at the same time amuses, our Colonial to find that great artists in the parent country admire this most unpoetic beast, and waste their time and talents in painting it.

Some five or six years ago, in the *Alpine Journal*, Sir Martin Conway gave a lively and amusing account of his first meeting with A. D. M'Cormick, the artist who subsequently accompanied him to the Karakoram Himalayas. "A friend," he wrote, "came to me bringing in his pocket a crumpled-up water sketch or impression of a lot of geese. I was struck by the breadth of the

treatment, and I remember saying that the man who could see such monumental magnificence in a flock of geese ought to be the kind of man to paint mountains, and render somewhat of their majesty."

I will venture to say that he looked at the sketch or impression with the artist's clear eye, but had not previously so looked at the living creature; or had not seen it clearly, owing to the mist of images—if that be a permissible word—that floated between it and his vision—remembered flavours and fragrances, of rich meats, and of sage and onions and sweet apple sauce. When this interposing mist is not present, who can fail to admire the goose—that stately bird-shaped monument of clouded grey or crystal white marble, to be seen standing conspicuous on any village green or common in England? For albeit a conquered bird, something of the ancient wild and independent spirit survives to give him a prouder bearing than we see in his fellow feathered servants. He is the least timid of our domestic birds, yet even at a distance he regards your approach in an attitude distinctly reminiscent of the grey-lag goose, the wariest of wild fowl, stretching up his neck and standing motionless and watchful, a sentinel on duty. Seeing him thus, if you deliberately go near him he does not slink or scuttle away, as other domestic birds of meaner spirits do, but boldly advances to meet and challenge you. How keen his senses are, how undimmed by ages of captivity the ancient instinct of watchfulness is in him, everyone must know who has slept in lonely country houses. At some late hour of the night the sleeper was suddenly awakened by the loud screaming of the geese; they had discovered the approach of some secret prowler, a fox perhaps, or a thievish tramp or gipsy, before a dog barked. In many a

lonely farmhouse throughout the land you will be told that the goose is the better watch-dog.

It happened that among the numerous letters I received from readers of *Birds and Man* on its first appearance there was one which particularly interested me, from an old gentleman, a retired schoolmaster in the cathedral city of Wells. He was a delightful letter-writer, but by and by our correspondence ceased and I heard no more of him for three or four years. Then I was at Wells, spending a few days looking up and inquiring after old friends in the place, and remembering my pleasant letter-writer I went to call on him. During our conversation he told me that the chapter which had impressed him most in my book was the one on the goose, especially all that related to the lofty, dignified bearing of the bird, its independent spirit and fearlessness of its human masters, in which it differs so greatly from all other domestic birds. He knew it well; he had been feelingly persuaded of that proud spirit in the bird, and had greatly desired to tell me of an adventure he had met with, but the incident reflected so unfavourably on himself, as a humane and fair-minded or sportsmanlike person, that he had refrained. However, now that I had come to see him he would make a clean breast of it.

It happened that in January some winters ago, there was a very great fall of snow in England, especially in the South and West. The snow fell without intermission all day and all night, and on the following morning Wells appeared half buried in it. He was then living with a daughter who kept house for him in a cottage standing in its own grounds on the outskirts of the town. On attempting to leave the house he found they were shut in by the snow, which had banked itself against the walls

to the height of the eaves. Half an hour's vigorous spade work enabled him to get out from the kitchen door into the open, and the sun in a blue sky shining on a dazzling white and silent world. But no milkman was going his rounds, and there would be no baker nor butcher nor any other tradesman to call for orders. And there were no provisions in the house! But the milk for breakfast was the first thing needed, and so with a jug in his hand he went bravely out to try and make his way to the milk shop which was not far off.

A wall and hedge bounded his front garden on one side, and this was now entirely covered by an immense snowdrift, sloping up to a height of about seven feet. It was only when he paused to look at this vast snow heap in his garden that he caught sight of a goose, a very big snow-white bird without a grey spot in its plumage, standing within a few yards of him, about four feet from the ground. Its entire snowy whiteness with snow for a background had prevented him from seeing it until he looked directly at it. He stood still gazing in astonishment and admiration at this noble bird, standing so motionless with its head raised high that it was like the figure of a goose carved out of some crystalline white stone and set up at that spot on the glittering snowdrift. But it was no statue; it had living eyes which without the least turning of the head watched him and every motion he made. Then all at once the thought came into his head that here was something, very good succulent food in fact, sent, he almost thought providentially, to provision his house; for how easy it would be for him as he passed the bird to throw himself suddenly upon and capture it! It had belonged to someone, no doubt, but that great snowstorm and the furious north-east wind had blown it far, far from its native place and it was lost

to its owner for ever. Practically it was now a wild bird free for him to take without any qualms and to nourish himself on its flesh while the snow siege lasted. Standing there, jug in hand, he thought it out, and then took a few steps towards the bird in order to see if there was any sign of suspicion in it; but there was none, only he could see that the goose without turning its head was all the time regarding him out of the corner of one eye. Finally he came to the conclusion that his best plan was to go for the milk and on his return to set the jug down by the gate when coming in, then to walk in a careless, unconcerned manner towards the door, taking no notice of the goose until he got abreast of it, and then turn suddenly and hurl himself upon it. Nothing could be easier; so away he went and in about twenty minutes was back again with the milk, to find the bird in the same place standing as before motionless in the same attitude. It was not disturbed at his coming in at the gate, nor did it show the slightest disposition to move when he walked towards it in his studied careless manner. Then, when within three yards of it, came the supreme moment, and wheeling suddenly round he hurled himself with violence upon his victim, throwing out his arms to capture it, and so great was the impulse he had given himself that he was buried to the ankles in the drift. But before going into it, in that brief moment, the fraction of a second, he saw what happened; just as his hands were about to touch it the wings opened and the bird was lifted from its stand and out of his reach as if by a miracle. In the drift he was like a drowning man, swallowing snow into his lungs for water. For a few dreadful moments he thought it was all over with him; then he succeeded in struggling out and stood trembling and gasping and choking, blinded with snow. By and by he recovered and had a look round,

and lo! there stood his goose on the summit of the snow bank about three yards from the spot where it had been! It was standing as before, perfectly motionless, its long neck and head raised, and was still in appearance the snow-white figure of a carved bird, only it was more conspicuous and impressive now, being outlined against the blue sky, and as before it was regarding him out of the corner of one eye. He had never, he said, felt so ashamed of himself in his life! If the bird had screamed and fled from him it would not have been so bad, but there it had chosen to remain, as if despising his attempt at harming it too much even to feel resentment. A most uncanny bird! it seemed to him that it had divined his intention from the first and had been prepared for his every movement; and now it appeared to him to be saying mentally: "Have you got no more plans to capture me in your clever brain, or have you quite given it up?"

Yes, he had quite, quite given it up.

And then the goose, seeing there were no more plans, quietly unfolded its wings and rose from the snowdrift and flew away over the town and the cathedral away on the further side, and towards the snow-covered Mendips; he, standing there, watching it until it was lost to sight in the pale sky.

—*W. H. Hudson*

From "Birds and Man"
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THE LAURENTIDES NATIONAL PARK

Less than forty miles from the oldest city on this continent north of Mexico, one may shoot or photograph bear, moose and caribou, catch trout that no ordinary fishing-basket will contain, observe beaver, otter, mink, and foxes going in peace about their daily avocations, watch eagles and other bird-fishers plying their trade, and march through leagues of breezy highlands where the print of a human foot would bring to the face that look of amazement that one remembers in the old woodcuts of Robinson Crusoe at the first intrusion on his island domain.

It was in the year 1895 that the idea took form of setting apart some two thousand five hundred square miles of the wild and mountainous country north of Quebec and south of Lake St. John, as "a forest reservation, fish and game preserve, public park and pleasure ground." At a later date the area was increased, until now some three thousand seven hundred square miles are removed from sale or settlement.

An important, though indirect, object was the maintenance of water-level in the dozen or more rivers which take their rise in the high-lying plateau forming the heart of the Park. A very breeding-ground of streams this is, and a good walker may visit the birth-places of half their number in a day's tramp. His way for the most part will lie ankle-deep through saturated moss, intersected in all directions by game trails, where the stoutest boot or moccasin that the wit of man has devised will fail to

exclude the universal element. Here, in their infancy, rivers run north which ultimately turn and flow into the St. Lawrence, and others flow south whose waters, at the last, Lake St. John will receive. Only a few yards and no great elevation divide streams that are to be a hundred miles apart when the great river takes them to itself, nor is there any man who knows what fortunes befall them through the whole course of their short but stormy lives. Though the assertion may appear to be almost ridiculous, there is work for the explorer in this region. Blank spaces on the map invite, which may yield discoveries in the way of game and fish, of mountains that no foot has trodden, of waters that no paddle has stirred and where no fly has fallen, of forests untouched by the axe.

The true range of the Laurentians is distant from the shore of the St. Lawrence some twenty miles, and of those who spend their summers at watering-places on the north shore not one in a thousand spares time from the amusements of society to make its acquaintance. The nearer and gentler slopes shut out the great mountain masses that march sou-west and nor-east from Quebec to the Saguenay, so that one who does not go out to seek for them might easily be ignorant of their existence. Those who commit themselves to the sea, and adventure so far as Ha Ha Bay, get some glimpse of the range in the Saguenay's wonderful chasm, but there it is sinking to a lower level. They do not guess that the Murray descends through a still grander and more beautiful gorge on its wild way to the sea. A mere handful of people have thought it worth while to push back forty miles from Murray Bay to see the tremendous rock walls of this canyon, the stupendous and unscalable precipices where

the Décharge de la Mine d'Argent falls hundreds of feet from the rim, like silver poured from a crucible, pauses and falls again.

As to the heights of these mountains one searches in vain for authentic figures. Eboulements and Ste. Anne, both near the shore of the St. Lawrence, rise over two thousand five hundred feet, and one peak in the valley of the Gouffre is credited with a height of three thousand two hundred feet, but these elevations are greatly exceeded as one journeys inland. Observations with several aneroids show that the St. Urbain road, the only highway that crosses the mountains, is three thousand feet above the sea at a point some thirty-five miles from Baie St. Paul, while the surrounding hills might be credited with another fifteen hundred feet. It seems to be within bounds to place the altitude of a series of mountain-tops in the country of Charlevoix at from four thousand to four thousand five hundred feet, to assign a height of two thousand five hundred feet to the interior plateau, and to say that most of the rivers rise about three thousand feet above the sea. As these assertions are not in accord with prevailing impressions, it would be interesting to have a more accurate determination than can be made with a pocket barometer.

The outlines of these ancient hills have been flattened and rounded by the age-long grinding and chiselling of glaciers, which have also built up huge moraines, and strewn the country with boulders. One such moraine I recall, which runs for a mile, as level and straight as a forty-foot railway embankment through a land of muskeg and fallen timber, giving the only good footing that is to be found on an old Indian portage.

The unit for rapid travel is three men in a light

canvas-covered canoe, and everything but actual necessaries must be sternly rejected if the party is to go straight forward without doubling at the portages. The order of march is, one man for the canoe, one for the tent, provisions, and cooking outfit, and the "Monsieur" going light, with personal baggage, blanket and such other trifles as rifle, glasses, rod and camera. Travelling in a northerly or southerly direction there are waterways which may be more or less utilized, and it is much easier to go from the St. Lawrence to Lake St. John than it is to cross the Park from west to east, although the distance, as the loon flies, is about the same. A rather careful estimate of the time required for the latter trip was fifteen days, and it would be fifteen days of exceedingly arduous work, with every kind of hard going that the wildest and wettest country can afford, and without the assistance even of a blazed trail. The sixty miles stretch out to one hundred and fifty by the devious route which would have to be followed.

This seems rather a forbidding picture of a tract that the government has set apart as a "public park and pleasure ground," but that is only at the first glance and to the faint-hearted one. Were it not for the outworks that nature has built to guard her citadel, were it not for the difficulties that have to be overcome in the old-fashioned way by strength and skill of hand and foot, these wild places would be overrun by board-floor and cocktail campers, by men with automatic rifles who shoot everything, including their companions, on sight, or take, for a record, fish that they cannot use, and by tourists who think it amusing to set on fire a noble birch or moss-draped spruce to make a "forest-torch." Thank the gods that be, no motor-roads conduct to this

paradise, no easy canoe-route offers, but he who would enter must win his way thither in the manner of his fathers,—and so may it be to the end of time.

—W. H. Blake

From "Brown Waters and Other Sketches"
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PART II

'VARSITY VERSUS McGILL

It is a glorious autumn day. The smoky air with just a nip of the coming frost in it hangs still over the trees, through whose bare tops and interlacing boughs the genial sunlight falls in a golden glory upon the grass below. The nip in the air, the golden light, the thrilling uncertainty of the coming match, the magnitude of the issue at stake, combine to raise the ardour of football enthusiasts to the highest pitch.

The record of each team is unique. Each has gone through the championship series without a single reverse. Perhaps never in their history have both universities been more worthily represented than by the teams that are to contest to-day the championship of the Dominion.

The McGill men are the first to appear on the campus, and are welcomed with loud and generous cheers, which are, however, redoubled upon the appearance of the 'Varsity champions.

Many eyes are turned upon the Fairbanks carriage. The young ladies are well known in University circles; but the quaint old lady, looking so handsome in spite of her plain black bonnet, awakens the curiosity of the crowd, which only increases when it becomes known that she is Shock's mother.

"Do you see Hamish, my dear?" inquires the old lady. "They are so much alike I cannot distinguish him."

"Go and bring him," cries Betty, and Lloyd returns in a moment with Shock and little Brown.

"Mother! mother! This is awful. You won't like it a bit. You'll think I'm getting killed many a time."

But the old lady only smiles placidly. "Indeed, and I'm not afraid for you. Run away, Hamish, and be careful of the laddies."

"Don't tell him that, Mrs. Macgregor," pleads Brown. "He's far too gentle as it is."

Some few minutes are spent in arranging for the kick-off.

"Oh, I do wish they would start," exclaims Betty, standing up in the carriage. "If they would only start!" she repeats. "I want to have a chance to shriek."

"There they go!" exclaims Lloyd.

It is McGill's kick. Huntingdon, the big captain and centre forward, takes it magnificently, following up hard with his whole team. Pepper, the 'Varsity full back, however, is at the spot and returns into touch. In the throw-in McGill secures the ball, and by a swift rush makes fifteen or twenty feet, when, amid the cheers of the spectators, both teams settle down into their first scrimmage.

These are the days of close scrimmage play, when nine men on each side put their heads down with the ball between them, and shove for dear life. Picking out, heeling out, or kicking out is strictly forbidden and promptly penalized.

The first scrimmage results in a dead ball. Once more a scrimmage is formed, but again the result is a dead ball. Over and over again this play is repeated with very little gain on either side. It gradually becomes apparent, however, that McGill in a scrimmage is slightly heavier. Foot by foot they work their way toward the 'Varsity goal.

The cries of "Hold them, 'Varsity! Hold them, 'Varsity!" and, "You've got 'em, McGill! You've got 'em!" indicate the judgment of the spectators.

"Ay," says the old lady, "they are a bit heavy for them, I doubt."

"Who!" inquires Betty, much amused.

"The Montreal lads. But we will be waiting a meenute."

It is a very slow game for the crowds that line every side of the field. Neither team will let the ball out. Again and again the quarters nip up the ball and pass, but the tackling is so hard and swift that the halves cannot get away, and by passing ground is almost always lost.

"Keep it in!" is the word. Inch by inch towards the 'Varsity goal the McGill forwards fight their way.

Suddenly the McGill scrimmage weakens and breaks up. Their quarter seizes the ball, passes it low and swift to Bunch, who is off like the wind across the field, dodges through the quarters, knocks off Martin and Bate, and with The Don coming hard upon his flank, sets off for the 'Varsity line with only Pepper between him and a touch-down.

But Pepper is waiting for him, cool and steady. As Bunch nears him he crouches like a cat, creeping slowly to meet his coming foe. Ten feet from the line straight at the full back goes Bunch. At two paces distance he changes his mind and swerves to the left with the hope of dodging past.

But he has ventured too far. Pepper takes two short steps, and like a tiger springs at his foe, winds his arms round his hips and drags him down, while The Don from the side leaps fiercely on him and holds the ball safe, five feet from the line.

'Varsity goes wild with relief.

"Pepper! Pepper! Red hot Pepper!" they chant rapturously in enthusiastic groups here and there, as Pepper's red head emerges from the crowd piled upon him and the prostrate Bunch. Again and again rises the chant, as the full back returns at a slow trot to his place behind the line.

"Indeed, it is Pepper is the grand laddie," says the old lady approvingly. "Many's the game he has saved, Hamish will be telling me."

"Now, McGill!" calls out a Montreal man, leading his fellows. "Stone wall! Stone wall! Shove 'em in! Shove 'em in!"

But the 'Varsity captain is alive to his danger, and getting his men low down he determines to hold the enemy fast till the fury of their attack be somewhat spent, or till fortune shall bring him aid.

"Get up! Get up there, 'Varsity!" yells the McGill contingent.

"Look at 'em saying their prayers!" shouts a boy.

"They need to," answers another.

"Get up, 'Varsity! Get up! Don't be afraid!" they yell derisively.

"Make 'em stand up, referee," a Montreal man insists.

Again and again the McGill captain appeals to the referee, who remonstrates, urges, and finally orders the 'Varsity to get up or be penalized.

Campbell perceives that something must be done. He moves Shock from the centre to the left wing of the scrimmage and calls in Martin and Bate from half.

By this time every 'Varsity man is on his feet, for he knows that Shock is about to lead the "screw" and before the scrimmage is well formed the McGill stone

wall is broken, and Campbell is boring through it with the ball, gaining a good ten feet and by a quick re-form ten more.

"Man, man, take heed. Yon's a dangerous game, I'm thinking," murmurs Shock's mother anxiously, to the amazed amusement of Lloyd, who replies, "Why, Mrs. Macgregor, you seem to know the game as well as the rest of us."

"Ay, Hamish has often showed me the working of the screw, and it is not to be depended upon in a place like yon."

The 'Varsity team breathe freely again and go in with new vim, while McGill settles down on the ball to recover steadiness.

But the 'Varsity captain has seen the screw work and resolves to try it again. Once more he moves Shock to the wing, signals to the quarters, and again the Montreal stone wall is demoralized. But instead of Campbell boring over the prostrate form of his big centre with the ball, the McGill captain, securing it, passes to Carroll, his quarter, who, dashing off as a feint to the right, passes far across the field to Bunch on the left.

Bunch, as usual, is in his place, catches beautifully and is off down the field like a whirlwind, dodging one, knocking off another, running round a third, till between him and the goal line he has only the half back, Martin, and the full.

The McGill people go wild again. "Bunch! Bunch!" they yell frantically, crowding down the line after him. "He's in! He's in!"

But not yet. Red Pepper is swiftly bearing down upon him, and as he comes within reach springs at him. But the wily Bunch has learned to measure that

long reach, and dodging back sharply, he slips round Pepper and makes for the line ten yards away.

A long groan goes up from the 'Varsity support, while from a hundred McGill throats rises the cry again—"He's in! He's in! A touch! A touch!"

But close upon him, and gaining at every foot, is The Don, the fleetest man in the 'Varsity team. For half a second it looks as if Bunch must make the line, but within three yards of the goal, and just as he is about to throw himself toward it, Balfour shoots out his arm, grasps his enemy by the back of the neck, and turning round, hurls him back with terrific force to the ground and clambers on top of him. It is a fierce tackle, giving great satisfaction to all the 'Varsity supporters, but to none more than to Mrs. Macgregor, who, as she sees the unfortunate Bunch hurled to earth, exclaims with quiet satisfaction, "That will be doing for ye, I'm thinking."

"Isn't she a great old warrior?" says Lloyd aside, to the young ladies.

"The Don! The Don!" cry the 'Varsity contingent. "We—like—Don! We—like—Don!" they chant, surging across the corner of the field in the wildest enthusiasm.

"Keep back! Keep back! Give him air." The referee, and the captains with their teams, push the crowd back, for Bunch is lying motionless upon the ground.

"It's simply a case of wind," says little Carroll, the McGill quarter, lightly.

"The want of it, you mean," says big Mooney, hauling Carroll back by the neck.

In a few minutes, however, the plucky McGill half back is up again, and once more the scrimmage is formed.

Gradually it grows more evident that McGill is heavier in the scrimmage, but this advantage is offset by the remarkable boring quality of the 'Varsity captain, who, upon the break up of a scrimmage, generally succeeds in making a few feet, frequently over Shock's huge body. As for Shock, he apparently enjoys being walked upon by his captain, and emerges from each successive scrimmage with his yellow hair fiercely erect, his face covered with blood, and always wreathed in smiles. No amount of hacking and scragging in a scrimmage can damp his ardour or ruffle the serenity of his temper.

"Isn't he ghastly?" exclaims Lloyd to the young ladies at his side.

"Perfectly lovely!" cries Betty in return.

"Ah, the old story of the bloodthirsty sex," replies Lloyd. "Hello, there goes half time," he adds, "and no score yet. This is truly a great game." Eagerly the men are taken charge of by their respective attendants, stripped, rubbed, slapped, and sponged.

Up come Shock and Brown. The blood on Shock's face gives him a terrifying appearance.

"Oh!" cries Helen anxiously, "you are hurt."

"Not a bit," he replies cheerily, glancing in surprise at her.

"How do you like it, Mrs. Macgregor?" inquires Brown.

"Man, laddie, they are a grand team, and it will be no easy matter to wheep them."

"Don't you think now that Shock is a little too gentle with them?" asks Brown wickedly.

"Well, it will not do to allow them to have their own way altogether," she replies cautiously. "But

run away, Hamish, and get yourself put right. There is much before you yet."

"Say, old man," says Brown as they trot off, "it's no credit to you to be a great centre. You'd disgrace your blood if you were anything else."

Into the 'Varsity dressing-room strolls old Black, the greatest captain of the greatest team 'Varsity has ever seen.

"Well, old chap," he calls out cheerfully to Campbell, "how goes it?"

"All right," says Campbell. "They are a great team, but I think we are holding them."

"They are the greatest team McGill ever sent here," replies Black.

"Oh, thanks, awfully," says Campbell, "but they are hardly up to the team of four years ago."

"Quite, I assure you, and you are holding them down."

"Do you think so?" There was no anxiety in the captain's tone, but there was a serious earnestness that somehow caught the ear of all the men in the room.

Black noticed it.

"Yes, you are holding them so far, without a doubt. Their weight tells in the scrimmage, and, of course, we do not know their back play yet, and that fellow Bunch Cameron is a wonder.

"That's what!" sings out little Brown. "But what's the matter with The Don?"

Immediately the roar comes back, "He's—all—right!"

"Yes," replies Black quietly, "Balfour is swifter, and harder in tackle."

"Have you anything to suggest?' asks Campbell,

with a reverence which a man in the struggle feels for one who has achieved. The men are all quiet, listening. But Black knows his place.

"Not in the least. You have a great team, and you are handling them perfectly."

"Hear that now, will you?" cries little Brown. "We're It!"

"Do you think we had better open up a little?" But Black is a gentleman and knows better than to offer advice.

"I really cannot offer an opinion. You know your men better than I. Besides, it is better to find out your enemy's tactics than to be too stuck on your own. Remember, those fellows are doing some thinking at this blessed minute. Of course," he went on hesitatingly, "if they keep playing the same close game—well—you might try—that is—you have got a great defence, you know, and The Don can run away from any of them."

"All right," said the captain. "We'll feel 'em first, boys. Keep at the old game. Close and steady till we get inside their heads. Watch their quarters. They're lightning in a pass."

It turns out that old Black is right. The McGills have been doing some thinking. From the kick-off they abandon the close scrimmage for a time, playing an open, dribbling, punting game, and they are playing it superbly. While they are sure in their catching and fierce in their tackle, their specialty is punting and following up. In this they are exceedingly dangerous. For the first ten minutes the 'Varsity men are forced within their own twenty-five yard line and are put upon their defence. The quarters and forwards begin to "back," a sure sign of coming doom.

"What in thunder are you doing back here!" roars Martin to little Brown. "Do you see anything wrong with this line?"

Nothing so maddens a half back as to see the forward line fall back into defence. Little Brown, accepting his rebuke with extraordinary meekness, abandons the defence and with the other quarters and forwards, who have been falling back, goes up where Campbell and Shock are doing their best to break the punting game and are waiting their chance for a run.

Every moment is dangerous; for the McGills have the spirit of victory strong upon them, and from their supporters on the side lines the triumphant and exasperating refrain is rising:

"Got 'em going, going, going,
Got 'em going home."

And indeed for a few minutes it looks like it. Again and again the McGill forward line, fed carefully and judiciously by their defence, rush to the attack, and it is all Campbell can do to hold his men in place. Seizing the opportunity of a throw-in for 'Varsity, he passes the word to his halves and quarters, "Don't give away the ball. Hold and run. Don't pass," and soon he has the team steady again and ready for aggressive work. Before long, by resolutely refusing to kick or pass and by close, hard tackling, 'Varsity forces McGill to abandon open play, and once more the game settles down into the old, terrible, grinding scrimmage.

"Oh, why don't they let The Don have it?" exclaims Betty. "I am sure he could get through."

The crowd seems to hold the same opinion, for they begin to call out, "Let it out, Alec. Let The Don have it."

But Campbell still plays cautiously a close game.

His men are staying well, and he is conscious of a reserve in his back line that he can call upon at the fitting moment. For that moment, however, he waits anxiously, for while his scrim is playing with bulldog grit, it is losing snap. True, Shock comes out of every tussle bloody, serene, and smiling as usual, but the other men are showing the punishment of the last hour's terrible scrimmage. The extra weight of the McGill line is beginning surely to tell.

It is an anxious moment for the 'Varsity captain, for any serious weakening of the scrimmage line is disastrous to the morals of a team.

"You are holding them all right, old chap," says old Black, taking advantage of a pause in the play while little Brown's leg is being rubbed into suppleness.

"I'd like to open out, but I'm afraid to do it," replies Campbell.

"Well, I think your back line is safe enough. Their scrimmage is gaining on you. I almost think you might venture to try a pass game."

It is upon the passing of his back line that Campbell has in previous matches depended for winning, and with ordinary opponents he would have adopted long ago this style of play, but these McGill men are so hard upon the ball, so deadly in tackling, and so sure in their catch that he hesitates to give them the opportunities that open play affords. But he has every confidence in The Don, his great half back; he has never played him in any match where he has not proved himself superior to everything in the field, and he resolves to give him a chance.

At this moment something happens, no one knows how. A high punt from behind sends the ball far up into the 'Varsity territory, and far before all others Bunch, who seems to have a kind of uncanny instinct

for what is going to happen, catches the ball on the bound and makes for the 'Varsity line with a comparatively open field before him. Fifteen yards from the line he is tackled by Martin, but ere he falls passes to Huntingdon, his captain, who, catching neatly and dodging between Campbell and another 'Varsity man, hurls his huge weight upon Pepper, who is waiting for him, crouched low after his usual style.

The full back catches him fairly and throws him over his shoulder. As both come heavily to the ground there is a sickening crack heard over the field. The McGill captain, with Pepper hanging desperately to his hips, drags himself over the line and secures a touchdown for McGill.

At once there rises a wild tumult of triumph from the McGill contingent, but after a minute or two the noise is followed by an anxious hush, and when the crowd about the prostrate players is dispersed Pepper is seen lying on his face tearing up the grass. Two or three doctors rush in from the crowd, and before long Pepper is carried off the field. His leg is broken.

A number of people begin to leave the field.

"Oh, isn't it horrible," groans Betty, turning very pale. "Shall we go home, Mrs. Macgregor?"

Helen looks at the old lady anxiously.

"Here is Hamish," she replies quickly. "We will wait."

Shock runs up, much disturbed.

"Awful, is it not?" he says to Helen, who is the first to meet him. "I am sorry, mother, you are here."

"Will they be stopping, think you, Hamish?" asks his mother. There is a shade of anxiety in her voice.

"No, mother, we must play it out."

"Then I will just be waiting for the end," says the

old lady calmly. "Poor laddie—but he was bravely defending his post. And you must just be going, Hamish man."

As Shock moved off the young ladies and Lloyd looked at her in amazement. It was in some such spirit that she had sent her husband to his last fight twenty years ago.

A cloud of grief and foreboding settles down upon the 'Varsity team, for Pepper is not only a great favourite with them, but as a full back they have learned to depend upon him. Huntingdon is full of regrets, and at once offers Campbell and the referee to forego the touchdown, and to scrimmage at the point of tackle.

"He would have held me, I know, bar the accident," he says.

The referee is willing, but Campbell will not hear of it.

"Put off a man," he says shortly, "and go on with the game."

Bate is moved from half to full, a man is taken from the scrimmage to supply his place, McGill makes a similar shift, and the game proceeds.

Huntingdon fails to convert the touchdown into a goal Bate kicks back into touch, and with desperate determination 'Varsity goes in to even the score.

Campbell resolves now to abandon the close game. He has everything to win, and to lose by four points is as much a loss as by a dozen.

"Play to your halves every time," he orders the quarters, and no sooner is play begun than the wisdom of the plan is seen. With a brilliant series of passes the 'Varsity quarters and halves work the ball through the McGill twenty-five line, and by following hard a high punt, force the enemy to a safety touch. No sooner has

the McGill captain kicked off than the ball is returned and again McGill is forced to *rouge*.

The score now stands four to two in favour of McGill, but the 'Varsity men have come to their strongest and are playing with an aggressiveness that cannot be denied. Again and again they press their opponents behind their twenty-five line.

"Oh," exclaims Betty, "if there is only time they can win yet. Do find out," she says to Lloyd, "what time there is left." And Lloyd comes back to announce that there are only six minutes to play.

"Hamish will be telling me that a game is often won in the last minute," remarks the old lady encouragingly.

As Campbell perceives his desperate case, he begins to swear low, fierce oaths at his quarters. In all their experience of their captain the 'Varsity men have never heard him swear, and they awake to the fact that they are face to face with a situation entirely unparalleled in their history as a team. They are being defeated, and about to lose their one chance of the proud distinction of holding the championship of Canada.

From man to man Campbell goes as he finds opportunity, his face white, his eyes ablaze, adjuring, urging, entreating, commanding, in a way quite unusual with him.

A new spirit seizes the men. Savagely they press the enemy. They are never off the ball, but follow it as hounds a hare, and they fling themselves so fiercely at their foe that in every tackle a McGill man goes down to earth.

But try as they may it seems impossible to get the ball to The Don. The McGill men have realized their danger and have men specially detailed to block the great 'Varsity half. Again and again The Don receives

the ball, but before he can get away these men are upon him.

At length, however, the opportunity comes. By a low, swift pass from Brown, Martin receives the ball and immediately transfers it to The Don. Straight into the midst of a crowd of McGill men he plunges, knocking off the hands reaching for him, slipping through impossible apertures, till he emerges at the McGill line with little Carroll hanging on to his shoulders, and staggering across falls fairly into the arms of big Mooney.

Down they go all three together, with hands on the ball.

"What is it? Oh, what is it?" shrieks Betty, springing upon the box.

"I am thinking it is what they will be calling a *maul in goal*, and it is a peety we cannot be seeing it," replies the dauntless old lady.

"Oh, it's The Don," exclaims Betty anxiously. "What are they doing to him? Run, oh, run and see!" and Lloyd runs off.

"It's a *maul* sure enough. Two of them have The Don down," he announces, "but he'll hold all right," he adds quickly, glancing keenly at Betty.

"Let me go," cried Betty. "I must go."

"Betty," says Helen, in a low voice, "be quiet."

"Oh, I don't care," cries Betty passionately. "I want to go."

"He'll hold all right," says Lloyd confidently, and Betty grows suddenly quiet.

"Ay, that he will, yon chap," agrees Mrs. Macgregor, standing up and trying to see what is going on.

"If The Don can hold for three minutes it will count two for his side; if Mooney and Carroll can get the ball away it will only count one," explained Lloyd.

About the three players struggling on the ground the crowd pours itself, yelling, urging, imploring, shrieking directions. Campbell stoops down over The Don and shouts into his ear. "Hold on, Don. It means the game," and The Don, lying on his back, winds his arms around the ball and sets himself to resist the efforts of Mooney and Carroll to get it away.

In vain the police and field censors try to keep back the crowd. They are swept helpless into the centre. Madder and wilder grows the tumult, while the referee stands, watch in hand, over the struggling three.

"Stop that choking, Carroll," says Shock to the little quarter, who is gripping The Don hard about the throat.

"Get off, Mooney," cries Campbell. "Get off his chest with your knees. Get off, I say, or I'll knock your head off."

But Mooney persists in boring into The Don's stomach with his knees, tugging viciously at the ball. With a curse Campbell springs at him. But as he springs a dozen hands reach for him. There is a wild rush of twenty men for each other's throats. Too close to strike, they can only choke and scrag and hack each other fiercely. The policemen push in, threatening with their batons, and there is a prospect of a general fight when the referee's whistle goes. Time is up. The *maul* is over. 'Varsity has its two points. The score now stands even, four to four, with two minutes to play.

They lift The Don from the ground. His breath is coming in gasps and he is trembling with the tremendous exertions of the last three minutes.

"Time there!" calls out Shock, who has Balfour in his arms.

The smile is all gone from Shock's face. As he

watches The Don struggling in deep gasps to recover his breath, for the first time in his football life he loses himself. He hands his friend to a couple of men standing near, strides over to Mooney, and catching him by the throat begins to shove him back through the crowd.

"You brute, you!" he roars. "What kind of a game do you call that! Jumping on a man when he is down, with your knees! For very little," he continues, struggling to get his arm free from the men who are hanging on it, "I would knock your face off."

Men from both sides throw themselves upon Shock and his foe and tear them apart.

"That's all right, Shock," cries The Don, laughing between his gasps, and Shock, suddenly coming to himself, slinks shamefacedly into the crowd.

"It is not often Hamish forgets himself in yon fashion," says his mother, shaking her head. "He must be sorely tried indeed," she adds confidently.

"I am quite sure of it," replies Helen. "He always comes out smiling." And the old lady looks at her approving a moment, and says, "Indeed, and you are right, lassie."

In a few minutes The Don is as fit as ever, and slapping Shock on the back says pleasantly, "Come along, old fire-eater. We've got to win this game yet," and Shock goes off with him, still looking much ashamed.

McGill kicks from the twenty-five line, but before the scrimmage that follows is over time is called, with an even score.

The crowd streams on the field tumultuously enthusiastic over a game such as has never been seen on that campus. Both sides are eager to go on, and it is arranged that the time be extended half an hour.

Old Black gets Campbell aside and urges, "Take

ten minutes off and get your men into quarters." Campbell takes his advice and the rubbers get vigorously to work at legs and loins, rubbing, sponging, slapping, until the men declare themselves fresh as ever.

"Not hurt, Don?" inquires Campbell anxiously.

"Not a bit," says The Don. "It didn't bother me at all. I was winded, you see, before I fell."

"Well," says Campbell, "we're going to give you a chance now. There's only one thing to do, men. Rush 'em. They play best in attack, and our defence is safe enough. What do you say, Black?"

"I entirely agree. But begin steady. I should use your whole half back line, however, for a while. They will lay for Balfour there."

"That's right," says the captain. "Begin steady and pass to Martin and McLaren for the first while, and then everyone give The Don a chance."

"And Shock," calls out little Brown, "don't be a fool, and stop fighting," at which everybody roars except Shock himself, who, ashamed of his recent display of temper, hurries off to the field.

Once more the campus is cleared. Battered and bloody as to features, torn and dishevelled as to attire, but all eager and resolved, the teams again line up, knowing well that they have before them a half-hour such as they have never yet faced in all their football career.

It is 'Varsity's kick. Campbell takes it carefully, and places it in touch well within the McGill twenty-five. After the throw-in, the teams settle down to scrimmage as steady as at the first, with this difference, however, that 'Varsity shows perceptibly weaker. Back step by step their scrimmage is forced toward the centre,

the retreat counterbalanced somewhat by the splendid individual boring of Campbell and Shock. But both teams are alert and swift at the quarters, fierce in tackle and playing with amazing steadiness.

Suddenly Carroll nips up the ball and passes hard and swift to the half back immediately behind him, who in turn passes far out to Bunch on the left wing. With a beautiful catch Bunch, never slacking speed, runs round the crowd, dodges the quarters, knocks off Martin, and with a crowd of men of both teams close upon his heels, makes for the line.

Before him stands Bate alone. From his tall, lank make one might easily think him none too secure on his legs. Bunch determines to charge, and like a little bull rushes full at him.

But Bate's whole football life has been one long series of deceptions, and so he is quite prepared for this kind of attack. As Bunch comes at him he steps lightly aside, catches the half back about the neck, swings him round and lands him prone with such terrific impact that the ball flies out of his grasp.

Immediately little Brown has it, passes to Martin, who on being tackled passes to The Don. The field before him is full of the enemy, but The Don never hesitates. Doubling, twisting, knocking off, he eludes man after man, while the crowds on the line grow more and more frantic, and at length, clearing the main body, he sets off across the field to more open country on the 'Varsity left. Behind him come Campbell, Shock, Martin and others, following hard; before him stand three of the McGill defence: Dorion, McDonnell and Mooney. He has already made a great run, and it looks as if he cannot possibly make through.

First Dorion springs at him, but The Don's open hand at the end of a rigid arm catches him full in the neck, and Dorion goes down like a stick.

Big McDonnell bears swiftly down upon him and leaps high at him, but The Don lowers his shoulder, catches McDonnell below the wind and slides him over his back; but before he can get up speed again little Carroll is clutching at his hips, and Mooney, the McGill full back, comes rushing at him. Swinging round, The Don shakes Carroll partly off, and with that fierce downward cut of his arm which is his special trick, sends the little quarter flying, and just as Mooney tackles, passes the ball over his shoulder to Shock, who is immediately pounced upon by half a dozen McGill men, but who, ere he is held, passes to Campbell, who in turn works forward a few yards, and again on being tackled, passes to The Don. It is a magnificent bit of play.

The spectators have long since passed all bounds of control, and are pouring on the field, yelling like mad people. Even the imperturbable old lady loses her calm for a moment, and gripping Helen's arm exclaims, "Look at that now! Man, man, yon is a grand laddie."

There is no chance for The Don to run, for a swarm of the McGill men stand between him and the line only a few yards off. Then he does the only possible thing. Putting his head down, he plunges into the crowd in front of him.

"Come on, Shock," yells Campbell. Instantly a dozen 'Varsity men respond to the cry and fall in behind Campbell and Shock, who, locking arms about The Don, are shoving him through for dear life.

There are two minutes of fierce struggle. Twenty men in a mass, kicking, scragging, fighting, but slowly

moving toward the McGill line, while behind them and around them the excited spectators wildly, madly yelling, leaping, imploring, adjuring by all kinds of weird oaths to "shove" or to "hold." In vain the McGill men throw themselves in the way of the advancing mass. Steadily, irresistibly the movement goes on. They are being beaten and they know it.

"Down! down!" yells big Huntingdon, dropping on his knees on the line in front of the tramping, kicking 'Varsity phalanx.

A moment's pause, and there is a mass of mingling arms, legs, heads and bodies, piled on the goal line.

"Held! held!" yell the McGill men and their supporters.

But before the referee can respond Shock seizes The Don below the waist, lifts him clear of the mob, and trampling on friend and foe alike, projects him over the struggling mass beyond the enemy's line, where he is immediately buried beneath a swarm of McGill men, who savagely jump upon him and jam his head and body into the turf.

"He's in! he's in!" shrieks Betty, wildly waving her hand.

"Will it be a win, think ye?" anxiously inquires Shock's mother. "It will hardly be that, I doubt. But, eh—h, yon's the lad."

"Down! down!" cries the 'Varsity captain. "Get off the man! Get off the man! Let him up, there!"

But the McGill men are slow to move.

"Get up!" roars Shock, picking them off and hurling them aside.

"Get up, men! Get up! That ball is down," yells the referee through the din, into the ears of those who are holding The Don in a death grip.

With difficulty they are persuaded to allow him to rise. When he stands up, breathless, bleeding at the mouth, but otherwise sound, the crowd of 'Varsity admirers go into a riot of rapture, throwing up caps, hugging each other in ecstatic war dances, while the team walk quietly about recovering their wind, and resisting the efforts of their friends to elevate them.

"Quit it!" growls Campbell. "Get off the field! Get back, you hoodlums!"

Meantime Huntingdon is protesting to the referee.

"I claim that ball was fairly held, back there. Balfour was brought to a dead stand."

"How do you know, Huntingdon?" returns Campbell. "Your head was down in the scrim."

"I could see his legs. I know his boots."

It is true that The Don has a peculiar toe on his boots.

"Oh," jeers Campbell scornfully, "that's all rot, you know, Huntingdon."

"Look here, Campbell, listen to what I say. I want you to remember I am speaking the truth."

Huntingdon's quiet tone has its effect.

"I would never think of challenging your word," replies Campbell, "but I think it is quite impossible that you could absolutely know that The Don came to a dead stand."

"I repeat, I can pick out Balfour's boots from a whole crowd, and I know he was brought to a stand. I am prepared to swear that. Can any man swear to the contrary?"

"Why, certainly," cries Campbell, "half a dozen men can. There's Shock, who was right behind him."

But Shock, thus appealed to, hesitates. He has an unfortunate conscience.

"I can't say for sure," he says, looking piteously at his captain.

"Weren't you moving all the time, Shock?"

"Well, I was shoving all the time."

"But hold on," says Huntingdon. "Will you say that Balfour was never brought to a stand? Will you swear that?"

"Well, I cannot say for sure," replies Shock in great distress. "It was not very long, anyway."

Yells of triumphant laughter break from the McGill crowd.

The referee is in great difficulty. He has a reputation for courage and fairness. He hesitates a moment or two, and then, while the crowd wait breathless for his decision, says, "You can all see that it is almost impossible to be certain, but on the whole I shall give it a 'hold.'"

It was a bitter moment to the 'Varsity men, but Campbell is a true sport.

"Shut up, men," he says in answer to the loud protests of his team. "Get behind the ball."

Every second is precious now, and the line is only three feet away.

Again the field is cleared. The teams, springing to their places in the scrimmage, began to shove furiously before the ball is in play.

"Get up, men!" says the referee. "You must get up. Let me get this ball in. Get up, McGill! Get off your knees!" for the McGill men are on their goal line in an attitude of devotion.

Again and again the scrimmage is formed, only to be broken by the eagerness of the combatants. At length the referee succeeds in placing the ball. Instantly Shock is upon it, and begins to crawl toward the line with half a dozen men on his back, gripping him by nose,

ears, face, throat, wherever a hand can find a vulnerable spot.

"Hold there!" calls the referee. "'Varsity ball."

"Get off the man! Get off!" cry the Varsity men, pulling the McGill fellows by legs and heads, till at length Shock rises from the bottom of the heap, grimy, bloody, but smiling, grimly holding to the ball. He has made six inches. The line is two feet and a half away.

It is again 'Varsity's ball, however, and that means a great deal, for with Campbell lies the choice of the moment for attack.

Placing Shock on the wing, and summoning his halves and quarters, Campbell prepares for a supreme effort. It is obviously the place for the screw.

The McGill men are down, crouching on hands and feet, some on their knees.

Campbell refuses to play and appeals to the referee in a tone of righteous indignation, "What sort of game is this? Look at those fellows!"

"Get up, McGill! Get up, or I'll penalize you," says the referee. Everyone knows he will keep his word. There is a movement on the part of McGill to rise. Campbell seizes the opportunity, lowers his head, and with a yell drops the ball in front of Shock. In the whirl of the screw the ball slips out to Brown, who tips it to The Don, but before he can take a single step half a dozen men are upon him and he is shoved back a couple of feet.

"Man, man," ejaculates the old lady, "will you not be careful!"

"I say!" exclaims old Black to a McGill enthusiast whom he had fought in the famous championship battle four years ago. "This is something like."

"Great ball," replies his friend. "We'll hold them yet. I've often seen a ball forced back from two feet off the line."

It is still the 'Varsity ball. The crowds are howling like maniacs, while the policemen and field censors are vainly trying to keep the field decently clear.

The Don resigns the ball to the captain and falls in behind. Every man is wet, panting, disfigured, but eager for the fight. Again the scrim forms, only to fall upon the ball.

"Dead ball," announces the referee, and both teams begin to manœuvre for advantage of position. A few inches is a serious thing.

Again the ball is placed and the men throw themselves upon it, Shock as usual at the bottom of the heap with the ball under him.

Old Black runs up through the crowd and whispers in Campbell's ear, "Put Balfour and Martin in the scrim. They are fresher." He has noticed that the scrim line on both sides is growing stale, and can do no more than grimly hold on. At once Campbell sees the wisdom of this suggestion. The Don, though not so heavy as Shock, is quite as strong, and is quicker than the big centre, who is beginning to show the effect of the tremendous series of scrimmages he has just passed through. Martin, though neither so strong nor so heavy, is like an eel.

Quietly Campbell thrusts the halves into the first line on the right, whispering to Shock, "Let Balfour have it, and back him up."

As The Don gets the ball Campbell throws himself behind him with the yell, "'Varsity! now!" At the same instant The Don drops the ball, and with the weight

of the whole team behind him begins to bore through the enemy.

For a few moments both teams hang in the balance, neither giving an inch, when old Black, yelling and waving wildly, attracts the attention of Bate.

"Go in!" he cries. "Go in!" and Bate, coming up with a rush, throws himself behind the scrim.

His weight turns the scale. Slowly at first, but gaining momentum with every inch, the mass yields, sways, and begins to move. The McGill men, shoving, hacking, scragging, fighting fiercely, finally dropping on their knees, strive to check that relentless advance. It is in vain. Their hour has come.

With hoarse cries, regardless of kicks and blows, trampling on prostrate foes, and followed by a mob of spectators tumultuously cheering, the 'Varsity wedge cleaves its way, till on the other side The Don appears with the ball hugged to his breast and Huntingdon hanging to his throat. A final rush and the ball is down.

"The ball is down!" cries the referee, and almost immediately time is called.

The great match is over. By four points 'Varsity holds the championship of the Dominion.

"The greatest match ever played on this ground," cries old Black, pushing through the crowd to Campbell, with both hands outstretched.

After him comes the Montreal captain.

"I congratulate you most heartily," he says, in a voice that breaks in spite of all he can do.

"Thanks, old man," says Campbell quietly. "It was a case of sheer luck."

"Not a bit of it," replies Huntingdon, recovering

himself. "You have a great team. I never saw a better."

"Well," replies Campbell heartily, "I have just seen as good, and there's none we would rather win from than McGill."

"And none," replies Huntingdon, "McGill would rather lick than 'Varsity."

Meantime Shock, breaking from a crowd of admirers who are bound to carry him in on their shoulders, makes for the Fairbanks carriage, and greets his mother quietly.

"Well, mother, it's over at last."

"Ay, it is. Poor fellows, they will be feeling bad. But come along, laddie. You will be needing your supper, I doubt."

Shock laughs loud. He knows his mother, and needs no words to tell him her heart is bursting with pride and triumph.

"Come in. Let us have the glory of driving you home," cries Betty.

"In this garb?" laughs Shock.

"That's the garb of your glory," says Helen, her fine eyes lustrous with excitement.

"Come, Hamish man, you will get your things and we will be waiting for you."

"Very well," he replies, turning away. "I will be only a minute."

He is not allowed to escape, but with a roar the crowd seize him, lift him shoulder high, and chanting, "Shock! Shock! we—like—Shock!" bear him away in triumph.

"Eh, what are the daft laddies saying now?" inquires the old lady, struggling hard to keep out of her voice the pride that shone in her eyes.

"Listen," cries Helen, her eyes shining with the same light. "Listen to them," and beating time with her hand she joins in the chant, "Shock! Shock! we—like—Shock."

—*Ralph Connor*

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THE KITTEN

Every wise man loves his own cat, but even the foolish love other people's kittens. All the cats that one has loved best have been full-grown—at least, they have been animals whose careers one has followed from the cradle to the grave—and yet one feels a temporary affection for any kitten in the world as it scurries under the sofa, protrudes an experimental head from under the valance as though the room were an unexplored African jungle, reaches out a paw and withdraws suddenly into the darkness, throws itself on its back and engages in a sham fight with the valance, and, righting itself, bolts with demons pursuing it to the folds of the curtain at the window. Most of our affections are the result of long associations, but everyone who sees a kitten falls in love at first sight. I suppose we are sentimental in our attitude to all young animals—foals, calves, pigs a month old, chickens, and ducklings. Even the psycho-analysts cannot persuade us that these pretty neophytes are as gross and dull as the elders of their species. A pig has at least a few weeks of innocence before it becomes a pig in the full sense of the word, and, if a chicken is not pure, then there is nothing pure on earth. At the same time, I think our affection for kittens is based on something else besides that vague sentiment of kindness we all feel in the presence of infancy and innocence. I am as fond of chickens as any one, but there is a monotony in their behaviour that makes it impossible to watch them with interest for more than a short period. I am a sworn admirer of calves, but calves, despite the menus in the

restaurants, have no brains and lack initiative. Every kitten, almost as soon as it has left the cradle, becomes (save at meal hours) an independent being, able to amuse itself like a child, inventive, adventurous, eager.

It is the only animal that enjoys looking at things for the sheer pleasure of seeing them moving. Dangle a string before the eyes of a duckling, and, if there is no food at the end of it, it will show no interest. Throw a paper ball along the ground in presence of a young pig, and it will find it duller than *Euphues*. A puppy, to be sure, will run after a ball, but I do not think either a foal or a calf will, and even a puppy lacks the all-embracing curiosity of a kitten. A kitten alone among the animals enjoys the use of its eyes to the full. Take it into the garden, and it starts with excitement at the shadow of a cabbage-butterfly passing over the grass. The rose-leaf stirring in the wind after the rain draws it like a magnet, and it approaches it stealthily, its eyes a-glitter with interest, and touches it tentatively with its paw, as though everything that moved must be investigated. It creeps among the godetias flattened by the rain, and, as each plant with the removal of its foot jumps upwards and swings like a pendulum, the kitten stays to look and wonder and perhaps to box timorously the vacillating flower. It cannot move a step in the garden without seeing something else moving—a privet-leaf, a blade of grass, a bird on the railings. If it settles down to sleep on the flagged path, an ant appears out of a crack and hurries earnestly on its errand, and the kitten sits up, with its ears forward and its head cocked sideways, studying the moving apparition, approaching it with a careful paw, backing from the ant as it returns as from an incoming tide, following the ant cautiously till it has

reached the crack and putting its foot swiftly on the crack as the ant disappears, raising its foot hurriedly from the crack as the ant re-emerges, and never taking its eyes off the insect till it sees its mother's tail moving and stalks this as a still better plaything. In a few months it will be only a cat and will no longer be interested in the traffic of ants, refusing to bestir itself for anything smaller than a moth. To-day, even an ant is something that moves and is therefore worth looking at. It is a point of view that kittens share with the wisest—or, at least, the happiest—of mankind.

Perhaps it is because we have at our best so much in common with kittens that we cannot help liking them. We owe so much of our own happiness to our alertness of observation that we praise an extreme form of the same characteristic in the kitten. We, too, were born with a passion for looking at everything that moves. The baby, taken into its father's bed before breakfast, notices the movement of the eyelids over the eyes, stares in solemn wonder, and attempts to put its finger into an eye that is the scene of such miracles. One day, it will grow up and cease even to notice the winking of eyelids, unless it is a man of genius, but to-day, like all babies, it has a genius of observation denied to most of its elders. All through its childhood it retains the genius in however decreasing measure. In the nursery it can watch a rain-drop coursing down the window-pane as though it were the first rain-drop that had ever appeared in the world. It may be that all the secrets of life are contained in a single rain-drop; the child alone among us looks at it as though this might be so. As it grows older, the tiniest and muddiest rill of water holds it fascinated. It can be happy by the hour standing on a bridge and throwing

grasses or pieces of stick into the stream, and hurrying to the other side of the bridge to see them moving downstream on the moving surface of the water. All wheels in motion give it pleasure. There is much satisfaction to be got from the slow stumble of cart-wheels along an old country road, and the huge wheel of a water-mill is a spectacle to keep a child late for dinner. Even the swinging of the pendulum of a clock and the halting movement of the second-hand are something at which to stand and stare, and the never-resting flames of the fire make even an unimaginative child imaginative.

The superiority of the child to the grown man in observation is shown in the greater interest it takes in the movements of such creatures as snails and caterpillars. I never knew a grown man who loved snails so much that he attempted to organize races between snails; but I have met a boy who did this, though not with any great success. As for caterpillars, the majority of men and women regard them as little better than vermin: the child, however, sees in the caterpillar something that moves, however wrigglingly, and can watch its progress along a stalk with as much patience as the caterpillar's own. Many children, I regret to say, are afraid of spiders, earwigs, beetles and mice, but I do not believe this fear is natural. Here the poison of terror has been instilled into their ears by parents and nurses. The child, I am sure, if left to itself, would make friends with earwigs and would shout with joy at the sight of a mouse running across the floor. There is no living creature, not even a house-fly, that does not, as it moves, interest the young human being.

It was surely no accident that led human beings to choose a ball—the most easily moved of all things—as the

instrument of so many of their games. Here is something which, as it is kicked or struck backwards and forwards, any healthy-blooded man can watch as eagerly as Galileo watched the moon. And, if a philosopher objected to his taking such extravagant pleasure in watching a tennis-ball or a cricket-ball or a football, he could only echo Galileo's noble remark on the moon, *Eppur si muove.* Many fine things have been said about the moon, but none finer than that. Here you have half the secret of the moon's beauty. A moon that stood eternally still in the same place—that never, cautious as a thief, rose behind the hills or sped along the west after the setting sun—would be no more than an arc-lamp in the sky, and we should cease to notice its presence or, at least, its loveliness. The very stars move in procession, and, though we praise the North Star because it is fixed, we should praise it less if all the stars were fixed. Whether the sun is fixed or not I do not know; at least, it does not look fixed. Had it been so, Joshua would have made it move—a finer miracle than he performed. As for our earth, it, too, with all its faults, is a kind of ball, and, if it were to cease to move, whole civilizations would perish: possibly we should all perish. Hence, it is no wonder that ball-games are part of the national religion in the more intelligent parts of the earth. The ball is the symbol of everything that keeps us alive on a mobile earth under a mobile sun.

The child and the kitten are born with an instinctive sense of these things. They could not explain their love of everything that moves, but we can explain it for them. And, occasionally, we can even recapture something of their wise pleasures. We, too, know that the fall of a single leaf on a still autumn day can take our eyes from a

book and make us forget the death of Cæsar. That solitary leaf spiralling to the ground seems to have more life in it for the moment than all the rest of the visible world. A hedgehog crackling its way out of the undergrowth on a soundless night compels us to watch it as though the rest of creation were merely a setting for this one creature. One can remember the scene in which a snake hastened into the secrecy of the brambles, long after one has forgotten the Greek conjugations. As for ants, when they go about their business, they can bring interest even into the flat world of flagstones. Those great bladders that they hoist out of the cracks, and tug and pull across the stones, with other ants eager to help coming up and pushing in the opposite direction, are to me a mystery, but I can sit beside the kitten and watch them as though I were watching the building of the Pyramids. The ant has, so far as I know, no virtue except that it moves, and no one would think of keeping a dead ant in a glass case; but while it moves it is as interesting as a star. The spider, again, while it remains still on the ceiling, is uninteresting except to those who fear it: let it begin to lower itself on its thread, however, and then return to the ceiling to fight its own shadow cast by the electric light, and, whether you are reading Shakespeare or a detective story, you can read no more for half-an-hour. Thus, at least, it was with me the other night when a spider suddenly began fighting its shadow. It chased the shadow across the ceiling, fought it leg by leg, dropped an inch and shook itself like an angry golly-wog, returned to the fight, suddenly lowered itself to the floor with arms outspread like a ballet-dancer let down from the flies of a theatre, lay on its back and climbed up its thread to the ceiling again, grappled with its

shadow, and so on till it was time for bed. I forget what the book was that I was reading, but I do not forget the spider. I could not have taken my eyes off him to read about Cleopatra. And, as I went to bed, I reflected: "How happy is the kitten that has nothing to do but to watch such things all day!"

—*Robert Lynd* ("*Y. Y.*")

From "The New Statesman," September, 1927
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ON BIG WORDS

I was cutting down the nettles by the hedge with a bill-hook when a small man with spectacles, a straw hat, a white alpaca jacket, and a book under his arm came up, stopped, and looked on. I said "Good evening," and he said "Good evening." Then, pointing to my handiwork, he remarked:

"You find the nettles very difficult to eradicate?"

I said I found them hard to keep down.

"They disseminate themselves most luxuriantly," he said.

I replied that they spread like the dickens.

"But they have their utility in the economy of Nature," he said.

I replied that Nature was welcome to them as far as I was concerned.

He then remarked that it was most salubrious weather, and I agreed that it had been a fine day. But he was afraid, he said, that the aridity of the season was deleterious to the crops, and I replied that my potatoes were doing badly. After that, I think it occurred to him that we did not speak the same language, and with another "Good evening" he passed on and I returned to the attack on the nettles.

It is an excellent thing to have a good vocabulary, but one ought not to lard one's common speech or everyday letters with long words. It is like going out for a walk in the fields with a silk hat, a frock-coat, and patent leather boots. No reasonable person could enjoy the country in such a garb. He would feel like a

blot on the landscape. He would be as much out of place as a guest in a smock-frock at a Buckingham Palace garden-party. And familiar conversation that dresses itself up in silk-hatted words is no less an offence against the good taste of things. We do not make a thing more impressive by clothing it in grand words any more than we crack a nut more neatly by using a sledge-hammer. We only distract attention from the thought to the clothes it wears. If we are wise our wisdom will gain from the simplicity of our speech, and if we are foolish our folly will only shout the louder through big words.

Take, for example, that remark of Dr. Johnson's about the swallows. "Swallows certainly sleep all the winter," he said. "A number of them conglobulate together, by flying round and round, and then all in a heap throw themselves under water and lie in the bed of a river." It was a foolish belief, but it would be unfair to scoff at Johnson for not being better informed than his contemporaries. It is that bumptious word "conglobulate" that does for him. It looks so learned and knowing that it calls attention to the absurdity like a college cap on a donkey's ears.

A fine use of words does not necessarily mean the use of fine words. That was the mistake which Humpty-Dumpty made in *Alice in Wonderland*. He thought that "impenetrability" was such a magnificent word that it would leave Alice speechless and amazed. Many writers are like that. When the reporter says that So-and-So "manipulated the ivories" (meaning that he had played the billiard-balls into position), or that So-and-So "propelled the sphere" (meaning that he had kicked the football), he feels that he has got out of the rut of common speech when in fact he has exchanged good words for

counterfeit coin. That is not the way of the masters of language. They do not vulgarize fine words. They glorify in simple words, as in Milton's description of the winged host:

> Far off their coming shone . . .

Quite ordinary words employed with a certain novelty and freshness can wear a distinction that gives them not only significance but a strange and haunting beauty. I once illustrated the point by showing the effects which the poets, and particularly Wordsworth and Keats, extract from the word "quiet." Shakespeare could perform equal miracles with the trivial word "sweet," which he uses with a subtle beauty that makes it sing like a violin in the hands of a master. Who can be abroad in the sunshine and singing of these spring days without that phrase, "the sweet o' the year," carolling like a bird in the mind? It is not a "jewel five words long." It is a dewdrop from the very mint of Nature. But Shakespeare could perform this magic with any old word. Take "flatter." A plain, home-spun word, you would say, useful for the drudgery of speech but nothing more. Then Shakespeare takes it in hand, and it shines bright as Sirius in the midnight sky:

> Full many a glorious morning have I seen
> Flatter the mountain tops with sovran eye.

I once wanted to use for purposes of quotation a familiar stanza of Burns, but one word, the vital word, escaped me. I give the stanza, with the word I lacked missing:

> To make a happy fireside clime
> For weans and wife—
> That's the true and sublime
> Of human life.

You, perhaps, know the missing word; but I could not recall it. I tried all the words that were serviceable,

and each seemed banal and commonplace. I dare not, for shame, mention the words I tried to use as patches for Burns. When I turned up the poem and found that poignant word "pathos," I knew the measure of my failure to draw the poet's bow.

We carry big words in our head for the expression of our ideas, and short words in our heart for the expression of our emotions. Whenever we speak the language of true feeling, it is our mother tongue that comes to our lips. It is equal to any burden. Take the familiar last stanza of Wordsworth's: "Three years she grew in sun and shower":

> Thus Nature spake—the work was done—
> How soon my Lucy's race was run!
> She died, and left to me
> This heath, this calm and quiet scene;
> The memory of what has been,
> And never more will be.

It is so simple that a child might have said it, and so charged with emotion that a man might be forgiven if he could not say it. *A Shropshire Lad* is full of this surge of feeling dressed in homespun, as when he says:

> Into my heart an air that kills
> From yon far country blows:
> What are those blue remembered hills,
> What spires, what farms are those?
>
> That is the land of lost content,
> I see it shining plain,
> The happy highways where I went
> And cannot come again.

Even in pictorial description the most thrilling effects, as in the case I have quoted from Milton, are produced not by the pomp of words but by the passion of words. In two rapid, breathless lines:

> The sun's rim dips, the stars rush out,
> With one stride comes the dark,

Coleridge flashes on the mind all the beauty and wonder of the tropic night. And though Shakespeare, like Milton and Wordsworth, could use the grand words when the purpose was rhetorical or decorative, he did not go to them for the expression of the great things of life. Then he speaks with what Raleigh calls the bare intolerable force of King Lear's:

> Do not laugh at me,
> For as I am a man, I think this lady
> To be my child Cordelia.

The higher the theme rises the more simple and austere becomes the speech, until the words seem like nerves bared and quivering to the agony of circumstance:

> *Lear.* And my poor fool is hanged! No, no, no life!
> Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
> And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
> Never, never, never, never, never!
> Pray you, undo this button. Thank you, sir.—
> Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips,—
> Look there, look there! [*He dies.*
> *Edgar.* He faints! My lord, my lord!—
> *Kent.* Break, heart; I prithee, break!
> *Edgar.* Look up, my lord.
> *Kent.* Vex not his ghost: O let him pass! he hates him
> That would upon the rack of this tough world
> Stretch him out longer.

The force of words can no farther go. And my friend in the white alpaca jacket will notice that they are all very little ones.

—*Alpha of the Plough* (*A. G. Gardiner*)

From "Many Furrows"
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London and Toronto

And, after all, the weather was ideal. They could not have had a more perfect day for a garden-party if they had ordered it. Windless, warm, the sky without a cloud. Only the blue was veiled with a haze of light gold, as it is sometimes in early summer. The gardener had been up since dawn, mowing the lawns and sweeping them, until the grass and the dark flat rosettes where the daisy plants had been seemed to shine. As for the roses, you could not help feeling they understood that roses are the only flowers that impress people at garden-parties; the only flowers that everybody is certain of knowing. Hundreds, yes, literally hundreds, had come out in a single night; the green bushes bowed down as though they had been visited by archangels.

Breakfast was not yet over before the men came to put up the marquee.

"Where do you want the marquee put, mother?"

"My dear child, it's no use asking me. I'm determined to leave everything to you children this year. Forget I am your mother. Treat me as an honoured guest."

But Meg could not possibly go and supervise the men. She had washed her hair before breakfast, and she sat drinking her coffee in a green turban, with a dark wet curl stamped on each cheek. Jose, the butterfly, always came down in a silk petticoat and a kimono jacket.

"You'll have to go, Laura; you're the artistic one."

Away Laura flew, still holding her piece of bread-and-

butter. It's so delicious to have an excuse for eating out of doors, and besides, she loved having to arrange things; she always felt she could do it so much better than anybody else.

Four men in their shirt-sleeves stood grouped together on the garden path. They carried staves covered with rolls of canvas, and they had big tool-bags slung on their backs. They looked impressive. Laura wished now that she was not holding that piece of bread-and-butter, but there was nowhere to put it, and she couldn't possibly throw it away. She blushed and tried to look severe and even a little bit short-sighted as she came up to them.

"Good morning," she said, copying her mother's voice. But that sounded so fearfully affected that she was ashamed, and stammered like a little girl, "Oh—er—have you come—is it about the marquee?"

"That's right, miss," said the tallest of the men, a lanky, freckled fellow, and he shifted his tool-bag, knocked back his straw hat and smiled down at her. "That's about it."

His smile was so easy, so friendly, that Laura recovered. What nice eyes he had, small, but such a dark blue! And now she looked at the others, they were smiling, too. "Cheer up, we won't bite," their smile seemed to say. How very nice workmen were! And what a beautiful morning! She mustn't mention the morning; she must be business-like. The marquee.

"Well, what about the lily-lawn? Would that do?"

And she pointed to the lily-lawn with the hand that didn't hold the bread-and-butter. They turned, they stared in the direction. A little fat chap thrust out his under-lip, and the tall fellow frowned.

"I don't fancy it," said he. "Not conspicuous enough. You see, with a thing like a marquee," and he

turned to Laura in his easy way, "you want to put it somewhere where it'll give you a bang slap in the eye, if you follow me."

Laura's upbringing made her wonder for a moment whether it was quite respectful of a workman to talk to her of bangs slap in the eye. But she did quite follow him.

"A corner of the tennis-court," she suggested. "But the band's going to be in one corner."

"H'm, going to have a band, are you?" said another of the workmen. He was pale. He had a haggard look as his dark eyes scanned the tennis-court. What was he thinking?

"Only a very small band," said Laura gently. Perhaps he wouldn't mind so much if the band was quite small. But the tall fellow interrupted.

"Look here, miss, that's the place. Against those trees. Over there. That'll do fine."

Against the karakas. Then the karaka-trees would be hidden. And they were so lovely, with their broad, gleaming leaves, and their clusters of yellow fruit. They were like trees you imagined growing on a desert island, proud, solitary, lifting their leaves and fruits to the sun in a kind of silent splendour. Must they be hidden by a marquee?

They must. Already the men had shouldered their staves and were making for the place. Only the tall fellow was left. He bent down, pinched a sprig of lavender, put his thumb and forefinger to his nose and snuffed up the smell. When Laura saw that gesture she forgot all about the karakas in her wonder at him caring for things like that—caring for the smell of lavender. How many men that she knew would have done such a thing. Oh, how extraordinarily nice workmen were, she thought.

Why couldn't she have workmen for friends rather than the silly boys she danced with and who came to Sunday night supper? She would get on much better with men like these.

It's all the fault, she decided, as the tall fellow drew something on the back of an envelope, something that was to be looped up or left to hang, of these absurd class distinctions. Well, for her part, she didn't feel them. Not a bit, not an atom. . . . And now there came the chock-chock of wooden hammers. Some one whistled, some one sang out, "Are you right there, matey?" "Matey!" The friendliness of it, the—the— Just to prove how happy she was, just to show the tall fellow how at home she felt, and how she despised stupid conventions, Laura took a big bite of her bread-and-butter as she stared at the little drawing. She felt just like a work-girl.

"Laura, Laura, where are you? Telephone, Laura!" a voice cried from the house.

"Coming!" Away she skimmed, over the lawn, up the path, up the steps, across the veranda, and into the porch. In the hall her father and Laurie were brushing their hats ready to go to the office.

"I say, Laura," said Laurie very fast, "you might just give a squiz at my coat before this afternoon. See if it wants pressing."

"I will," said she. Suddenly she couldn't stop herself. She ran at Laurie and gave him a small, quick squeeze. "Oh, I do love parties, don't you?" gasped Laura.

"Ra-ther," said Laurie's warm, boyish voice, and he squeezed his sister, too, and gave her a gentle push. "Dash off to the telephone, old girl."

The telephone. "Yes, yes; oh yes. Kitty? Good

morning, dear. Come to lunch? Do, dear. Delighted of course. It will only be a very scratch meal—just the sandwich crusts and broken meringue-shells and what's left over. Yes, isn't it a perfect morning? Your white? Oh, I certainly should. One moment—hold the line. Mother's calling." And Laura sat back. "What, mother? Can't hear."

Mrs. Sheridan's voice floated down the stairs. "Tell her to wear that sweet hat she had on last Sunday."

"Mother says you're to wear that *sweet* hat you had on last Sunday. Good. One o'clock. Bye-bye."

Laura put back the receiver, flung her arms over her head, took a deep breath, stretched and let them fall. "Huh," she sighed, and the moment after the sigh she sat up quickly. She was still, listening. All the doors in the house seemed to be open. The house was alive with soft, quick steps and running voices. The green baize door that led to the kitchen regions swung open and shut with a muffled thud. And now there came a long, chuckling absurd sound. It was the heavy piano being moved on its stiff castors. But the air! If you stopped to notice, was the air always like this? Little faint winds were playing chase in at the tops of the windows, out at the doors. And there were two tiny spots of sun, one on the inkpot, one on a silver photograph frame, playing, too. Darling little spots. Especially the one on the inkpot lid. It was quite warm. A warm little silver star. She could have kissed it.

The front door bell pealed, and there sounded the rustle of Sadie's print skirt on the stairs. A man's voice murmured; Sadie answered, careless, "I'm sure I don't know. Wait. I'll ask Mrs. Sheridan."

"What is it, Sadie?" Laura came into the hall.

"It's the florist, Miss Laura."

It was, indeed. There, just inside the door, stood a wide, shallow tray full of pots of pink lilies. No other kind. Nothing but lilies—canna lilies, big pink flowers, wide open, radiant, almost frighteningly alive on bright crimson stems.

"O-oh, Sadie!" said Laura, and the sound was like a little moan. She crouched down as if to warm herself at that blaze of lilies; she felt they were in her fingers, on her lips, growing in her breast.

"It's some mistake," she said faintly. "Nobody ever ordered so many. Sadie, go and find mother."

But at that moment Mrs. Sheridan joined them.

"It's quite right," she said calmly. "Yes, I ordered them. Aren't they lovely?" She pressed Laura's arm. "I was passing the shop yesterday, and I saw them in the window. And I suddenly thought for once in my life I shall have enough canna lilies. The garden-party will be a good excuse."

"But I thought you said you didn't mean to interfere," said Laura. Sadie had gone. The florist's man was still outside at his van. She put her arm round her mother's neck and gently, very gently, she bit her mother's ear.

"My darling child, you wouldn't like a logical mother, would you? Don't do that. Here's the man."

He carried more lilies still, another whole tray.

"Bank them up, just inside the door, on both sides of the porch, please," said Mrs. Sheridan. "Don't you agree, Laura?"

"Oh, I *do*, mother."

In the drawing-room Meg, Jose and good little Hans had at last succeeded in moving the piano.

"Now, if we put this chesterfield against the wall

and move everything out of the room except the chairs, don't you think?"

"Quite."

"Hans, move these tables into the smoking-room, and bring a sweeper to take these marks off the carpet and—one moment, Hans—" Jose loved giving orders to the servants, and they loved obeying her. She always made them feel they were taking part in some drama. "Tell mother and Miss Laura to come here at once."

"Very good, Miss Jose."

She turned to Meg. "I want to hear what the piano sounds like, just in case I'm asked to sing this afternoon. Let's try over 'This Life is Weary.'"

Pom! Ta-ta-ta *Tee*-ta! The piano burst out so passionately that Jose's face changed. She clasped her hands. She looked mournfully and enigmatically at her mother and Laura as they came in.

This Life is *Wee*-ary,
A Tear—a Sigh.
A Love that *Chan*-ges,
This Life is *Wee*-ary,
A Tear—a Sigh.
A Love that *Chan*-ges,
And then . . . Good-bye!

But at the word "Good-bye," and although the piano sounded more desperate than ever, her face broke into a brilliant, dreadfully unsympathetic smile.

"Aren't I in good voice, mummy?" she beamed.

This Life is *Wee*-ary,
Hope comes to Die.
A Dream—a *Wa*-kening.

But now Sadie interrupted them. "What is it, Sadie?"

"If you please, m'm, cook says have you got the flags for the sandwiches?"

"The flags for the sandwiches, Sadie?" echoed Mrs. Sheridan dreamily. And the children knew by her face that she hadn't got them. "Let me see." And she said to Sadie firmly, "Tell cook I'll let her have them in ten minutes."

Sadie went.

"Now, Laura," said her mother quickly, "come with me into the smoking-room. I've got the names somewhere on the back of an envelope. You'll have to write them out for me. Meg, go upstairs this minute and take that wet thing off your head. Jose, run and finish dressing this instant. Do you hear me, children, or shall I have to tell your father when he comes home to-night? And—and, Jose, pacify cook if you do go into the kitchen, will you? I'm terrified of her this morning."

The envelope was found at last behind the dining-room clock, though how it had got there Mrs. Sheridan could not imagine.

"One of you children must have stolen it out of my bag, because I remember vividly—cream-cheese and lemon-curd. Have you done that?"

"Yes."

"Egg and—" Mrs. Sheridan held the envelope away from her. "It looks like mice. It can't be mice, can it?"

"Olive, pet," said Laura, looking over her shoulder.

"Yes, of course, olive. What a horrible combination it sounds. Egg and olive."

They were finished at last, and Laura took them off to the kitchen. She found Jose there pacifying the cook, who did not look at all terrifying.

"I have never seen such exquisite sandwiches," said Jose's rapturous voice. "How many kinds did you say there were, cook? Fifteen?"

"Fifteen, Miss Jose."

"Well, cook, I congratulate you."

Cook swept up crusts with the long sandwich knife, and smiled broadly.

"Godber's has come," announced Sadie, issuing out of the pantry. She had seen the man pass the window.

That meant the cream puffs had come. Godber's were famous for their cream puffs. Nobody ever thought of making them at home.

"Bring them in and put them on the table, my girl," ordered cook.

Sadie brought them in and went back to the door. Of course, Laura and Jose were far too grown-up to really care about such things. All the same, they couldn't help agreeing that the puffs looked very attractive. Very. Cook began arranging them, shaking off the extra icing sugar.

"Don't they carry one back to all one's parties?" said Laura.

"I suppose they do," said practical Jose, who never liked to be carried back. "They look beautifully light and feathery, I must say."

"Have one each, my dears," said cook in her comfortable voice. "Yer ma won't know."

Oh, impossible. Fancy cream puffs so soon after breakfast. The very idea made one shudder. All the same, two minutes later Jose and Laura were licking their fingers with that absorbed inward look that only comes from whipped cream.

"Let's go into the garden, out by the back way," suggested Laura. "I want to see how the men are getting on with the marquee. They're such awfully nice men."

But the back door was blocked by cook, Sadie, Godber's man and Hans.

Something had happened.

"Tuk-tuk-tuk," clucked cook like an agitated hen. Sadie had her hand clapped to her cheek as though she had toothache. Hans's face was screwed up in the effort to understand. Only Godber's man seemed to be enjoying himself; it was his story.

"What's the matter? What's happened?"

"There's been a horrible accident," said cook. "A man killed."

"A man killed! Where? How? When?"

But Godber's man wasn't going to have his story snatched from under his very nose.

"Know those little cottages just below here, miss?" Know them? Of course, she knew them. "Well, there's a young chap living there, name of Scott, a carter. His horse shied at a traction-engine, corner of Hawke Street this morning, and he was thrown out on the back of his head. Killed."

"Dead!" Laura stared at Godber's man.

"Dead when they picked him up," said Godber's man with relish. "They were taking the body home as I come up here." And he said to the cook, "He's left a wife and five little ones."

"Jose, come here." Laura caught hold of her sister's sleeve and dragged her through the kitchen to the other side of the green baize door. There she paused and leaned against it. "Jose!" she said, horrified, "how ever are we going to stop everything?"

"Stop everything, Laura!" cried Jose in astonishment. "What do you mean?"

"Stop the garden-party, of course." Why did Jose pretend?

But Jose was still more amazed. "Stop the garden-party? My dear Laura, don't be so absurd. Of course,

we can't do anything of the kind. Nobody expects us to. Don't be so extravagant."

"But we can't possibly have a garden-party with a man dead just outside the front gate.

That really was extravagant, for the little cottages were in a lane to themselves at the very bottom of a steep rise that led up to the house. A broad road ran between. True, they were far too near. They were the greatest possible eyesore, and they had no right to be in that neighbourhood at all. They were little mean dwellings painted a chocolate brown. In the garden patches there was nothing but cabbage stalks, sick hens and tomato cans. The very smoke coming out of their chimneys was poverty-stricken. Little rags and shreds of smoke, so unlike the great silvery plumes that uncurled from the Sheridans' chimneys. Washerwomen lived in the lane, and sweeps and a cobbler, and a man whose house-front was studded all over with minute bird-cages. Children swarmed. When the Sheridans were little they were forbidden to set foot there because of the revolting language and of what they might catch. But since they were grown up, Laura and Laurie on their prowls sometimes walked through. It was disgusting and sordid. They came out with a shudder. But still one must go everywhere; one must see everything. So through they went.

"And just think of what the band would sound like to that poor woman!" said Laura.

"Oh, Laura!" Jose began to be seriously annoyed. "If you're going to stop a band playing every time some one has an accident, you'll lead a very strenuous life. I'm every bit as sorry about it as you. I feel just as sympathetic." Her eyes hardened. She looked at her sister just as she used to when they were little and fighting

together. "You won't bring a drunken workman back to life by being sentimental," she said softly.

"Drunk! Who said he was drunk?" Laura turned furiously on Jose. She said just as they had used to say on those occasions, "I'm going straight up to tell mother."

"Do, dear," cooed Jose.

"Mother, can I come into your room?" Laura turned the big glass door-knob.

"Of course, child. Why, what's the matter? What's given you such a colour?" And Mrs. Sheridan turned round from the dressing-table. She was trying on a new hat.

"Mother, a man's been killed," began Laura.

"*Not* in the garden?" interrupted her mother.

"No, no!"

"Oh, what a fright you gave me!" Mrs. Sheridan sighed with relief, and took off the big hat and held it on her knees.

"But listen, mother," said Laura. Breathless, half-choking, she told the dreadful story. "Of course, we can't have our party, can we?" she pleaded. "The band and everybody arriving. They'd hear us, mother; they're nearly neighbours!"

To Laura's astonishment her mother behaved just like Jose; it was harder to bear because she seemed amused. She refused to take Laura seriously.

"But, my dear child, use your common sense. It's only by accident we've heard of it. If some one had died there normally—and I can't understand how they keep alive in those poky little holes—we should still be having our party, shouldn't we?"

Laura had to say "yes" to that, but she felt it was all wrong. She sat down on her mother's sofa and pinched the cushion frill.

"Mother, isn't it really terribly heartless of us?" she asked.

"Darling!" Mrs. Sheridan got up and came over to her, carrying the hat. Before Laura could stop her she had popped it on. "My child!" said her mother, "the hat is yours. It's made for you. It's much too young for me. I have never seen you look such a picture. Look at yourself!" And she held up her hand-mirror.

"But, mother," Laura began again. She couldn't look at herself; she turned aside.

This time Mrs. Sheridan lost patience just as Jose had done.

"You are being very absurd, Laura," she said coldly. "People like that don't expect sacrifices from us. And it's not very sympathetic to spoil everybody's enjoyment as you're doing now."

"I don't understand," said Laura, and she walked quickly out of the room into her own bedroom. There, quite by chance, the first thing she saw was this charming girl in the mirror, in her black hat trimmed with gold daisies, and a long black velvet ribbon. Never had she imagined she could look like that. Is mother right? she thought. And now she hoped her mother was right. Am I being extravagant? Perhaps it was extravagant. Just for a moment she had another glimpse of that poor woman and those little children, and the body being carried into the house. But it all seemed blurred, unreal, like a picture in the newspaper. I'll remember it again after the party's over, she decided. And somehow that seemed quite the best plan. . . .

Lunch was over by half-past one. By half-past two they were all ready for the fray. The green-coated band had arrived and was established in a corner of the tennis-court.

"My dear!" trilled Kitty Maitland, "aren't they too like frogs for words? You ought to have arranged them round the pond with the conductor in the middle on a leaf."

Laurie arrived and hailed them on his way to dress. At the sight of him Laura remembered the accident again. She wanted to tell him. If Laurie agreed with the others, then it was bound to be all right. And she followed him into the hall.

"Laurie!"

"Hallo!" He was half-way upstairs, but when he turned round and saw Laura he suddenly puffed out his cheeks and goggled his eyes at her. "My word, Laura! You do look stunning," said Laurie. "What an absolutely topping hat!"

Laura said faintly "Is it?" and smiled up at Laurie, and didn't tell him after all.

Soon after that people began coming in streams. The band struck up; the hired waiters ran from the house to the marquee. Wherever you looked there were couples strolling, bending to the flowers, greeting, moving on over the lawn. They were like bright birds that had alighted in the Sheridans' garden for this one afternoon, on their way to—where? Ah, what happiness it is to be with people who all are happy, to press hands, press cheeks, smile into eyes!

"Darling Laura, how well you look!"

"What a becoming hat, child!"

"Laura, you look quite Spanish. I've never seen you look so striking."

And Laura, glowing, answered softly, "Have you had tea? Won't you have an ice? The passion-fruit ices really are rather special." She ran to her father and

begged him. "Daddy, darling, can't the band have something to drink?"

And the perfect afternoon slowly ripened, slowly faded, slowly its petals closed.

"Never a more delightful garden-party . . ." "The greatest success . . ." "Quite the most . . ."

Laura helped her mother with the good-byes. They stood side by side in the porch till it was all over.

"All over, all over, thank heaven," said Mrs. Sheridan. "Round up the others, Laura. Let's go and have some fresh coffee. I'm exhausted. Yes, it's been very successful. But oh, these parties, these parties! Why will you children insist on giving parties!" And they all of them sat down in the deserted marquee.

"Have a sandwich, daddy dear. I wrote the flag."

"Thanks." Mr. Sheridan took a bite and the sandwich was gone. He took another. "I suppose you didn't hear of a beastly accident that happened to-day?" he said.

"My dear," said Mrs. Sheridan, holding up her hand. "we did. It nearly ruined the party. Laura insisted we should put it off."

"Oh, mother!" Laura didn't want to be teased about it.

"It was a horrible affair all the same," said Mr. Sheridan. "The chap was married, too. Lived just below in the lane, and leaves a wife and half a dozen kiddies, so they say."

An awkward little silence fell. Mrs. Sheridan fidgeted with her cup. Really, it was very tactless of father. . . .

Suddenly she looked up. There on the table were all those sandwiches, cakes, puffs, all uneaten, all going to be wasted. She had one of her brilliant ideas.

"I know," she said. "Let's make up a basket. Let's send that poor creature some of this perfectly good food. At any rate, it will be the greatest treat for the children. Don't you agree? And she's sure to have neighbours calling in and so on. What a point to have it all ready prepared. Laura!" She jumped up. "Get me the big basket out of the stairs cupboard."

"But, mother, do you really think it's a good idea?" said Laura.

Again, how curious, she seemed to be different from them all. To take scraps from their party. Would the poor woman really like that?

"Of course! What's the matter with you to-day? An hour or two ago you were insisting on us being sympathetic, and now—"

Oh well! Laura ran for the basket. It was filled, it was heaped by her mother.

"Take it yourself, darling," said she. "Run down just as you are. No, wait, take the arum lilies, too. People of that class are so impressed by arum lilies."

"The stems will ruin her lace frock," said practical Jose.

So they would. Just in time. "Only the basket, then. And, Laura!"—her mother followed her out of the marquee—"don't on any account—"

"What, mother?"

No, better not put such ideas into the child's head! "Nothing! Run along."

It was just growing dusk as Laura shut their garden gates. A big dog ran by like a shadow. The road gleamed white, and down below in the hollow the little cottages were in deep shade. How quiet it seemed after the afternoon. Here she was going down the hill to

somewhere where a man lay dead, and she couldn't realize it. Why couldn't she? She stopped a minute. And it seemed to her that kisses, voices, tinkling spoons, laughter, the smell of crushed grass were somehow inside her. She had no room for anything else. How strange! She looked up at the pale sky, and all she thought was, "Yes, it was the most successful party."

Now the broad road was crossed. The lane began, smoky and dark. Women in shawls and men's tweed caps hurried by. Men hung over the palings; the children played in the doorways. A low hum came from the mean little cottages. In some of them there was a flicker of light, and a shadow, crab-like, moved across the window. Laura bent her head and hurried on. She wished now she had put on a coat. How her frock shone! And the big hat with the velvet streamer—if only it was another hat! Were the people looking at her? They must be. It was a mistake to have come; she knew all along it was a mistake. Should she go back even now?

No, too late. This was the house. It must be. A dark knot of people stood outside. Beside the gate an old, old woman with a crutch sat in a chair, watching. She had her feet on a newspaper. The voices stopped as Laura drew near. The group parted. It was as though she was expected, as though they had known she was coming here.

Laura was terribly nervous. Tossing the velvet ribbon over her shoulder, she said to a woman standing by, "Is this Mrs. Scott's house?" and the woman, smiling queerly, said, "It is, my lass."

"Oh, to be away from this! She actually said, "Help me, God," as she walked up the tiny path and knocked. To be away from those staring eyes, or to be

covered up in anything, one of those women's shawls even. I'll just leave the basket and go, she decided. I shan't even wait for it to be emptied.

Then the door opened. A little woman in black showed in the gloom.

Laura said, "Are you Mrs. Scott?" But to her horror the woman answered, "Walk in, please, miss," and she was shut in the passage.

"No," said Laura, "I don't want to come in. I only want to leave this basket. Mother sent—"

The little woman in the gloomy passage seemed not to have heard her. "Step this way, please, miss," she said in an oily voice, and Laura followed her.

She found herself in a wretched little low kitchen, lighted by a smoky lamp. There was a woman sitting before the fire.

"Em," said the little creature who had let her in. "Em! It's a young lady." She turned to Laura. She said meaningly, "I'm 'er sister, miss. You'll excuse 'er, won't you?"

"Oh, but of course!" said Laura. "Please, please don't disturb her. I—I only want to leave—"

But at that moment the woman at the fire turned round. Her face, puffed up, red, with swollen eyes and swollen lips, looked terrible. She seemed as though she couldn't understand why Laura was there. What did it mean? Why was this stranger standing in the kitchen with a basket? What was it all about? And the poor face puckered up again.

"All right, my dear," said the other. "I'll thenk the young lady."

And again she began, "You'll excuse her, miss, I'm sure," and her face, swollen too, tried an oily smile.

Laura only wanted to get out, to get away. She was

back in the passage. The door opened. She walked straight through into the bedroom, where the dead man was lying.

"You'd like a look at 'im, wouldn't you?" said Em's sister, and she brushed past Laura over to the bed. "Don't be afraid, my lass,—and now her voice sounded fond and sly, and fondly she drew down the sheet—"'e looks a picture. There's nothing to show. Come along, my dear."

Laura came.

There lay a young man, fast asleep—sleeping so soundly, so deeply, that he was far, far away from them both. Oh, so remote, so peaceful. He was dreaming. Never wake him up again. His head was sunk in the pillow, his eyes were closed; they were blind under the closed eyelids. He was given up to his dream. What did garden-parties and baskets and lace frocks matter to him? He was far from all those things. He was wonderful, beautiful. While they were laughing and while the band was playing, this marvel had come to the lane. Happy . . . happy. . . . All is well, said that sleeping face. This is just as it should be. I am content.

But all the same you had to cry, and she couldn't go out of the room without saying something to him. Laura gave a loud childish sob.

"Forgive my hat," she said.

And this time she didn't wait for Em's sister. She found her way out of the door, down the path, past all those dark people. At the corner of the lane she met Laurie.

He stepped out of the shadow. "Is that you, Laura?"

"Yes."

"Mother was getting anxious. Was it all right?"

"Yes, quite. Oh, Laurie!" She took his arm, she pressed up against him.

"I say, you're not crying, are you?" asked her brother.

Laura shook her head. She was.

Laurie put his arm round her shoulder. "Don't cry," he said in his warm, loving voice. "Was it awful?"

"No," sobbed Laura. "It was simply marvellous. But, Laurie—" She stopped, she looked at her brother. "Isn't life," she stammered, "isn't life—" But what life was she couldn't explain. No matter. He quite understood.

"*Isn't* it, darling?" said Laurie.

—*Katherine Mansfield*

From "The Garden Party and Other Stories"
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Katherine Mansfield

TEARS

It has been observed that fainting has gone out of fashion, and that heroines no longer faint from emotion. Indeed, the only modern heroine I can recall who faints at an emotional crisis is Ann Whitefield in the last act of *Man and Superman*, whose collapse is certainly not made an occasion for sympathy. It seems that tears, too, are falling out of favour. Sentimental novelists, and they are indices to common feeling, are now all for iron self-control; they count on producing the pathetic effects of their old-fashioned prototypes by insisting on the contrary that she or he did *not* break down. If they describe tears, they are tears of joy or "hard, dry sobs," and a quiver of the lip is held to be more moving. Sentiment, indeed, to be widely popular now, must be cloaked in a sham indifference; in the talk of Mr. Kipling's subalterns the reserve which intentionally betrays emotion could not be carried further.

But open weeping was not always held in such disfavour. Sterne, who certainly studied to be admired by the world and to cut a figure there as a man of finest sensibility, parades his proneness to tears as the irreproachable proof of it. He had no misgiving that his readers might think him an ass for crying over a dead donkey. Tears were the noble language of the eye, and the only trouble was that they could not be always turned on at the right moment. To Byron later they were still, at any rate, an ornament of womanhood:

> Oh! too convincing, dangerously dear
> In woman's eye the unanswerable tear.

Or again he sings:

> What lost a world and bade a hero fly?
> The timid tear in Cleopatra's eye.

It is not thus that we are now made to feel the fascinations of a heroine. Goethe was in advance of his time in sentiment, though not perhaps in humour, when after mentioning the lovely tear that glittered in Theresa's right eye, he makes her say to Wilhelm Meister, "Think not that I am so weak, so easy to be moved. It is but the eye that weeps. There was a little wart upon the under-eyelid; they have removed it successfully; but the eye has been weak ever since; the smallest cause brings a tear into it. Here sat the little wart: you cannot see a vestige of it now." The next generation, the generation of Dickens and Thackeray, gives us the impression of having cried more easily than we do; they mention often a particular kind of tear called "a manly tear," which is seldom shed to-day.

They were not such manly tears as Virgil praised in Euryalus when he had lost the race.

> Lacrimaeque decorae
> Gratior et pulchro veniens in corpore virtus.

As for such a man as the hero of Gray's *Elegy*, of whom we are told

> He gave to misery (all he had) a tear,

our social reformers will have none of him.

Affairs of State are now conducted without tears. To us it is strange to hear that Cromwell and his council spent eight hours sobbing and crying before they signed the King's death-warrant. In our House of Commons there is sometimes excitement; but though a Lobby correspondent recorded that on one occasion Mr. Asquith's voice "broke like the string of a Stradivarius under the

bow of a maestro," who would believe that an event similar to Lord John Russell's withdrawal, during the Crimean War, of his second Reform Bill (say Mr. Lloyd George's withdrawal of the Insurance Bill, to which he is so personally pledged) could evoke such a scene as this? "I know," wrote an M.P. in 1854, describing it, "that the unbidden tears gushed to my cheeks, and looking round I could see scores of other careless, worldly men struck by the same emotion—and even the Speaker (as he subsequently admitted to me) was affected in precisely the same manner. The face of the Caucasian (Disraeli) was, of course, as immovable as usual, but Mr. Walpole wept outright." And when poor Mr. Walpole cried some years later because the mob had torn up the railings of Hyde Park, he was dubbed "weeping" Walpole, and there were jokes in *Punch* about "tears, idle tears!" Yes, time is against tears.

"If you have tears, prepare to shed them now," for though it is not a good moment, it is the best you will get.

The occasions on which a man weeps are not always indicative of the spot where his steadiest, strongest feelings lie. There is a working handle to the mechanical pump of tears in us all, which the most trivial circumstance may get hold of. Our self-conscious and honestly analytical age has become aware of it, and this is one of the reasons why tears have fallen into disrepute. But sometimes the occasions on which a man is recorded to have wept are extraordinarily illuminating. Take the instance of Rossini. He is recorded to have wept three times: once when he heard Paganini play for the first time, once when the debut of one of his operas was hissed, and once when, returning late, he let fall into a piece of ornamental water the truffled duck he was carrying home to supper. After that we feel we know Rossini.

Yet there are puzzles connected with tears: why should sympathy with others' distress excite tears more easily than our own troubles? Why should people who hardly ever cry over anything that happens to them, cry profusely over books? Why should those who meet each other with great joy, weep when they meet? These questions, Why is this? Why is that? Why is a cow's tail long? Why is a fox's bushy? are quite uninteresting to many; but they are not so to all, and it is to such my concluding remarks are addressed.

To explain these puzzles we must suppose that sympathy is a separate human emotion, distinct from affection, though affection intensifies it, and is not merely, as has been so often asserted, the pale reflection in ourselves of another's emotions; and that crying has become the natural expression of this distinct emotion, when it reaches intensity. For people are moved to tears when great good fortune befalls those they love, just as naturally as when they realize their distress. They cry also at the news of a national victory, or at the description of a heroic act. This hypothesis that sympathy is a distinct emotion, which also finds its natural relief in tears, would also explain our readiness to cry over characters in books and plays; since art appeals directly to our faculty for sympathy, and neither self-consciousness nor irrelevant impressions and associations intervene, in reading, to check its exercise.

Tears are, of course, also the natural physical expression of our own pain and distress; but men at any rate are drilled from a very early age to keep back tears which rise from such causes. In the nursery boys are taught that they "mustn't cry" when they hurt themselves, and "blubbing" at school is terrible disgrace. How strong the effect of this training is in making us keep back our tears,

may be seen by comparing ourselves with races who do not go through it. Many Southern and Eastern peoples cry easily from vexation or disappointment; though they may be courageous enough, they are quite abandoned in their expression of grief. I remember well my astonishment on seeing a ferocious and terrifying Albanian burst into tears because he was not allowed to carry my bag.

Most Englishmen tend to think that only feeble folk weep; a great mistake. And in consequence of having learnt that they must repress tears when they spring from their own pain and distress, they come to regard all tears, including those which spring from sympathy, as signs of weakness. Again, our feelings of sympathy are curiously independent of our judgments of people and the relative importance of things. We dislike being moved against our judgment—it is a most uncomfortable feeling—yet all we can do is to repress the visible signs that we are moved. We tend to become suspicious of tears.

But I should be sorry if as a race we ever reached the perfect physical self-control of the Redskins, the Japanese, and the Laplanders. Though it would, of course, be a boon to those who now have often "to turn away to hide their want of emotion."

Tears are peculiar to man, the Indian elephant, and one species of monkey.

—*Desmond MacCarthy*

From "Remnants"
By permission of the Author

WHEN THE RAIN CAME

When the rain came! How shall I write or say or sing or in any way tell what joy there was in our little world when the rain came? For weeks the sun had been pouring down intolerable heat, and the springs went dry and the grass withered and all signs failed. It was in vain that we studied the sunsets of gold and cinnabar and dawns of pearl and chrysoprase. The fountains of the deep were sealed. The noonday was a furnace and there was no relief in the night. Never before in the memory of man had there been such heat and drought, and the farmers themselves began to look as if they would dry up and blow away, they were so tanned and sunburned and heat-scorched by work in the hayfields. The cattle panted under the shrivelling shade trees and scarcely lifted their heads when little whirlwinds sucked up the dust from the burned pastures. The birds sang, but their music was almost an irritation in that fever and swelter. Heat, heat, nothing but sunshine and heat through the long insufferable day, and still heat in the sleepless, dewless night. Surely the land had been forgotten or a curse had been put upon it. And then the rain came!

. . . . . .

What do the people who live in cities know of the infinite blessing of rain? A passing watercart or a squirting garden hose satisfies their shrivelled needs. But with us in the country it is different. When we need rain we need rivers and oceans of it, and this time we needed it as never before. And just as hope was begin-

ning to fail, thunderheads began to push up along the horizon. But the rain did not come. Time and again storms gathered in the west, but those who were watching reported drearily: "Gone to the north," or "Gone to the south." Sometimes a wide-winged storm would cast its shadow over us and sprinkle us with a few big drops and a cool wind would blow from it, but there is little satisfaction in being cooled with the wind from other people's rain.

After some days of this teasing a storm came that somehow could not slip off to the north or to the south. It came at us squarely with a front like Niagara and a great rushing wind before it. It crackled with thunder and blazed with lightning, and the first downpour was mingled with hail. It lasted for only a few minutes, but while it lasted it was a veritable cloud-burst. The spouting eaves could not carry all their treasure, but overflowed in splashing and tinkling rivulets. And the murmur we heard was not all of the falling rain. It was full of the thanksgiving of the grass and of the leaves that were held up like cupped palms to catch the reviving shower. When the cloud passed and the sun came out a great sigh of relief seemed to go up from all nature and once more the music of the birds was grateful and sweet to hear.

. . . . . .

But though the first shower was good it was but a sup to the thirsty earth. An hour after it had fallen there was not even a puddle left for the children to paddle in with bare feet, but the corn-leaves had uncurled and were shining with tender green. The next day was hot, but early in the afternoon great clouds began to pile in the sky and storms began to pass to the north and south. Presently one came to us, and when it had passed the

children saw for the first time in their lives a perfect rainbow. It arched the sky magnificently, but we rejected its promise of fair weather. We wanted more rain, and realized as never before the wisdom of the words that Agur, the son of Jakeh, spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal: "There are three things that are never satisfied—yea, four things that say not, It is enough." And one of these four things is "the earth that is not filled with water." Fortunately our hope was not disappointed. The rainbow as a sign of fair weather proved as false as all the signs that had failed us when it was dry. The next day came hot and steamy, with thunder rumbling in the distance and a curtain of clouds overhead. All day it continued to get darker and at last a still rain came from the south. It was one of those satisfying downpours that soak in as they fall, and it brought peace and healing and renewed life. And we knew that the land had not been forgotten and that there was not a curse upon it.

. . . . . .

While sitting listening to the rain I felt that I, too, was being refreshed and revived. Scraps of poetry floated through my memory, murmurous and melodious, and when the wind stirred it brought memories of the sea—not of the sea when tempestuous and plangent, but of the soothing hours when

> The sea with its soft susurrus
> Comes up through the ivory gate.

One poem above all others seemed to fit my mood, and I began to piece it together as line by line it came back to me. It was Henry Kendall's wonderful poem which I had clipped from a paper years ago and had unconsciously committed to memory through many readings:

The song that once I dreamt about,
The tender, touching thing,
As radiant as the rose without—
The love of wind and wing—
The perfect verses to the tune
Of woodland music set,
As beautiful as afternoon,
Remain unwritten yet.

At first I could not understand why this particular poem was haunting me, but presently I understood. It is interwoven with the imagery of the rain. Listen to this:

It is too late to write them now,
The ancient fire is cold,
No ardent lights illume the brow
As in the days of old.
I cannot dream the dream again:
But when the happy birds
Are singing in the sunny rain
I think I hear its words.

I think I hear the echo still
Of long-forgotten tones,
When evening winds are on the hill
And sunset fires the cones.
But only in the hours supreme,
With songs of land and sea,
The lyrics of the leaf and stream,
This echo comes to me.

No longer doth the earth reveal
Her gracious green and gold;
I sit where youth was once and feel
That I am growing old.
The lustre from the face of things
Is wearing all away;
Like one who beats with tired wings,
I rest and muse to-day.

But in the night and when the rain
The troubled torrent fills,
I often think I see again
The river in the hills.
And when the day is very near,
And birds are on the wing,
My spirit fancies it can hear
The song I cannot sing.

The night closed in with the warm rain pouring from the chambers of the south, and when I went to bed in the tent I could hear it beating over me. It was a good sound. a sleepy sound, and more soothing than "poppies and mandragora and all the drowsy sirops of the world." In the morning the rain-drenched earth was glistening with moisture, and I went to the cornfield to cultivate. It was a joy to work the ground in the condition it was in, and I went at it with a will. Although the corn is no better than it should be after the long dry spell, I have broken up the "capillaries" and have a "dust mulch" in that field that scientific farmers would come miles to see if they knew about it. The weather is cool, and it looks as if the rain were over for a while, but we have had enough for the present, and already the drought is almost forgotten. It was terrible while it lasted, but everything was filled with new life "when the rain came."

—*Peter McArthur*

From "Familiar Fields"
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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

No man since Washington has become to Americans so familiar or so beloved a figure as Abraham Lincoln. He is to them the representative and typical American, the man who best embodies the political ideals of the nation. He is typical in the fact that he sprang from the masses of the people, that he remained through his whole career a man of the people, that his chief desire was to be in accord with the beliefs and wishes of the people, that he never failed to trust in the people and to rely on their support. Every native American knows his life and his speeches. His anecdotes and witticisms have passed into the thought and the conversation of the whole nation as those of no other statesman have done.

He belongs, however, not only to the United States, but to the whole of civilized mankind. It is no exaggeration to say that he has, within the last thirty years, grown to be a conspicuous figure in the history of the modern world. Without him, the course of events, not only in the western hemisphere but in Europe also, would have been different, for he was called to guide at the greatest crisis of its fate a State already mighty, and now far more mighty than in his days, and the guidance he gave has affected the march of events ever since. A life and a character such as his ought to be known to and comprehended by Europeans as well as by Americans. Among Europeans, it is especially Englishmen who ought to appreciate him and understand the significance of his life, for he came of an English

stock, he spoke the English tongue, his action told upon the progress of events and the shaping of opinion in all British communities everywhere more than it has done upon any other nation outside America itself.

This collection of Lincoln's speeches seeks to make him known by his words as readers of history know him by his deeds. In popularly-governed countries the great statesman is almost of necessity an orator, though his eminence as a speaker may be no true measure either of his momentary power or of his permanent fame, for wisdom, courage and tact bear little direct relation to the gift for speech. But whether that gift be present in greater or in lesser degree, the character and ideas of a statesman are best studied through his own words. This is particularly true of Lincoln, because he was not what may be called a professional orator. There have been famous orators whose speeches we may read for the beauty of their language or for the wealth of ideas they contain, with comparatively little regard to the circumstances of time and place that led to their being delivered. Lincoln is not one of these. His speeches need to be studied in close relation to the occasions which called them forth. They are not philosophical lucubrations or brilliant displays of rhetoric. They are a part of his life. They are the expression of his convictions, and derive no small part of their weight and dignity from the fact that they deal with grave and urgent questions, and express the spirit in which he approached those questions. Few great characters stand out so clearly revealed by their words, whether spoken or written, as he does.

Accordingly Lincoln's discourses are not like those of nearly all the men whose eloquence has won them fame. When we think of such men as Pericles, Demosthenes,

Æschines, Cicero, Hortensius, Burke, Sheridan, Erskine, Canning, Webster, Gladstone, Bright, Massillon, Vergniaud, Castelar, we think of exuberance of ideas or of phrases, of a command of appropriate similes or metaphors, of the gifts of invention and of exposition, of imaginative flights, or outbursts of passion fit to stir and rouse an audience to like passion. We think of the orator as gifted with a powerful or finely-modulated voice, an imposing presence, a graceful delivery. Or if —remembering that Lincoln was by profession a lawyer and practised until he became President of the United States—we think of the special gifts which mark the forensic orator, we should expect to find a man full of ingenuity and subtlety, one dexterous in handling his case in such wise as to please and capture the judge or the jury whom he addresses, one skilled in those rhetorical devices and strokes of art which can be used, when need be, to engage the listener's feelings and distract his mind from the real merits of the issue.

Of all this kind of talent there was in Lincoln but little. He was not an artful pleader; indeed, it was said of him that he could argue well only those cases in the justice of which he personally believed, and was unable to make the worse appear the better reason. For most of the qualities which the world admires in Cicero or in Burke we should look in vain in Lincoln's speeches. They are not fine pieces of exquisite diction, fit to be declaimed as school exercises or set before students as models of composition.

What, then, are their merits? and why do they deserve to be valued and remembered? How comes it that a man of first-rate powers was deficient in qualities appertaining to his own profession which men less remarkable have possessed?

To answer this question, let us first ask what were the preparation and training Abraham Lincoln had for oratory, whether political or forensic.

Born in rude and abject poverty, he had never any education, except what he gave himself, till he was approaching manhood. Not even books wherewith to inform and train his mind were within his reach. No school, no university, no legal faculty had any part in training his powers. When he became a lawyer and a politician, the years most favourable to continuous study had already passed, and the opportunities he found for reading were very scanty. He knew but few authors in general literature, though he knew those few thoroughly. He taught himself a little mathematics, but he could read no language save his own, and can have had only the faintest acquaintance with European history or with any branch of philosophy.

The want of regular education was not made up for by the persons among whom his lot was cast. Till he was a grown man, he never moved in any society from which he could learn those things with which the mind of an orator or a statesman ought to be stored. Even after he had gained some legal practice, there was for many years no one for him to mix with except the petty practitioners of a petty town, men nearly all of whom knew little more than he did himself.

Schools gave him nothing, and society gave him nothing. But he had a powerful intellect and a resolute will. Isolation fostered not only self-reliance but the habit of reflection, and, indeed, of prolonged and intense reflection. He made all that he knew a part of himself. He thought everything out for himself. His convictions were his own—clear and coherent. He was not positive or opinionated, and he did not deny that at certain

moments he pondered and hesitated long before he decided on his course. But though he could keep a policy in suspense, waiting for events to guide him, he did not waver. He paused and reconsidered, but it was never his way either to go back upon a decision once made, or to waste time in vain regrets that all he expected had not been attained. He took advice readily, and left many things to his ministers; but he did not lean upon his advisers. Without vanity or ostentation, he was always independent, self-contained, prepared to take full responsibility for his acts.

That he was keenly observant of all that passed under his eyes, that his mind played freely round everything it touched, we know from the accounts of his talk, which first made him famous in the town and neighbourhood where he lived. His humour, and his memory for anecdotes which he could bring out to good purpose at the right moment, are qualities which Europe deems distinctively American, but no great man of action in the nineteenth century, even in America, possessed them in the same measure. Seldom has so acute a power of observation been found united to so abundant a power of sympathy.

These remarks may seem to belong to a study of his character rather than of his speeches, yet they are not irrelevant, because the interest of his speeches lies in their revelation of his character. Let us, however, return to the speeches and to the letters, some of which are scarcely less noteworthy than are the speeches.

What are the distinctive merits of these speeches and letters? There is less humour in them than his reputation as a humorist would have led us to expect. They are serious, grave, practical. We feel that the man does not care to play over the surface of the subject, or to use it

as a way of displaying his cleverness. He is trying to get right down to the very foundation of the matter and tell us what his real thoughts about it are. In this respect he sometimes reminds us of Bismarck's speeches, which, in their rude, broken, forth-darting way, always go straight to their destined aim; always hit the nail on the head. So, too, in their effort to grapple with fundamental facts, Lincoln's bear a sort of likeness to Cromwell's speeches, though Cromwell has far less power of utterance, and always seems to be wrestling with the difficulty of finding language to convey to others what is plain, true and weighty to himself. This difficulty makes the great Protector, though we can usually see what he is driving at, frequently confused and obscure. Lincoln, however, is always clear. Simplicity, directness and breadth are the notes of his thought. Aptness, clearness, and again simplicity, are the notes of his diction. The American speakers of his generation, like most of those of the preceding generation, but unlike those of that earlier generation to which Alexander Hamilton, John Adams, Marshall and Madison belonged, were generally infected by a floridity which made them a byword in Europe. Even men of brilliant talent, such as Edward Everett, were by no means free from this straining after effect by highly-coloured phrases and theatrical effects. Such faults have to-day virtually vanished from the United States, largely from a change in public taste, to which perhaps the example set by Lincoln himself may have contributed. In the forties and fifties florid rhetoric was rampant, especially in the West and South, where taste was less polished than in the older States. That Lincoln escaped it is a striking mark of his independence as well as of his greatness. There is no superfluous ornament in his orations, nothing tawdry, nothing otiose. For the most

part, he addresses the reason of his hearers, and credits them with desiring to have none but solid arguments laid before them. When he does appeal to emotion, he does it quietly, perhaps even solemnly. The note struck is always a high note. The impressiveness of the appeal comes not from fervid vehemence of language, but from the sincerity of his own convictions. Sometimes one can see that through its whole course the argument is suffused by the speaker's feeling, and when the time comes for the feeling to be directly expressed, it glows not with fitful flashes, but with the steady heat of an intense and strenuous soul.

The impression which most of the speeches leave on the reader is that their matter has been carefully thought over even when the words have not been learnt by heart. But there is an anecdote that on one occasion, early in his career, Lincoln went to a public meeting not in the least intending to speak, but presently being called for by the audience, rose in obedience to the call, and delivered a long address so ardent and thrilling that the reporters dropped their pencils and, absorbed in watching him, forgot to take down what he said. It has also been stated, on good authority, that on his way in the railroad cars to the dedication of the monument on the field of Gettysburg, he turned to a Pennsylvanian gentleman who was sitting beside him and remarked, "I suppose I shall be expected to say something this afternoon; lend me a pencil and a bit of paper," and that he thereupon jotted down the notes of a speech which has become the best known and best remembered of all his utterances, so that some of its words and sentences have passed into the minds of all educated men everywhere.

That famous Gettysburg speech is the best example

one could desire of the characteristic quality of Lincoln's eloquence. It is a short speech. It is wonderfully terse in expression. It is quiet, so quiet that at the moment it did not make upon the audience, an audience wrought up by a long and highly-decorated harangue from one of the prominent orators of the day, an impression at all commensurate to that which it began to make as soon as it was read over America and Europe. There is in it not a touch of what we call rhetoric, or of any striving after effect. Alike in thought and in language it is simple, plain, direct. But it states certain truths and principles in phrases so aptly chosen and so forcible, that one feels as if those truths could have been conveyed in no other words, and as if this deliverance of them were made for all time. Words so simple and so strong could have come only from one who had meditated so long upon the primal facts of American history and popular government that the truths those facts taught him had become like the truths of mathematics in their clearness, their breadth, and their precision.

The career of Lincoln is often held up to ambitious young Americans as an example to show what a man may achieve by his native strength, with no advantages of birth or environment or education. In this there is nothing improper, nothing fanciful. The moral is one which may well be drawn, and in which those on whose early life Fortune has not smiled may find encouragement. But the example is, after all, no great encouragement to ordinary men, for Lincoln was an extraordinary man.

He triumphed over the adverse conditions of his early years because Nature had bestowed on him high and rare powers. Superficial observers who saw his homely aspect and plain manners, and noted that his

fellow-townsmen, when asked why they so trusted him, answered that it was for his common-sense, failed to see that his common-sense was a part of his genius. What is common-sense but the power of seeing the fundamentals of any practical question, and of disengaging them from the accidental and transient features that may overlie these fundamentals—the power, to use a familiar expression, of getting down to bed-rock? One part of this power is the faculty for perceiving what the average man will think and can be induced to do. This is what keeps the superior mind in touch with the ordinary mind, and this is perhaps why the name of "common-sense" is used, because the superior mind seems in its power of comprehending others to be itself a part of the general sense of the community. All men of high practical capacity have this power. It is the first condition of success. But in men who have received a philosophical or literary education there is a tendency to embellish, for purposes of persuasion, or perhaps for their own gratification, the language in which they recommend their conclusions, or to state those conclusions in the light of large general principles, a tendency which may, unless carefully watched, carry them too high above the heads of the crowd. Lincoln, never having had such an education, spoke to the people as one of themselves. He seemed to be saying not only what each felt, but expressing the feeling just as each would have expressed it. In reality, he was quite as much above his neighbours in insight as was the polished orator or writer, but the plain directness of his language seemed to keep him on their level. His strength lay less in the form and vesture of the thought than in the thought itself, in the large, simple, practical view which he took of the position. And thus, to repeat what has been said already, the ster-

ling merit of these speeches of his, that which made them effective when they were delivered and makes them worth reading to-day, is to be found in the justness of his conclusions and their fitness to the circumstances of his time. When he rose into higher air, when his words were clothed with stateliness and solemnity, it was the force of his conviction and the emotion that thrilled through his utterance that printed the words deep upon the minds and drove them home to the hearts of the people.

What is a great man? Common speech, which after all must be our guide to the sense of the terms which the world uses, gives this name to many sorts of men. How far greatness lies in the power and range of the intellect, how far in the strength of the will, how far in elevation of view and aim and purpose,—this is a question too large to be debated here. But of Abraham Lincoln it may be truly said that in his greatness all three elements were present. He had not the brilliance, either in thought or word or act, that dazzles, nor the restless activity that occasionally pushes to the front even persons with gifts not of the first order. He was a patient, thoughtful, melancholy man, whose intelligence, working sometimes slowly but always steadily and surely, was capacious enough to embrace, and vigorous enough to master, the incomparably difficult facts and problems he was called to deal with. His executive talent showed itself not in sudden and startling strokes, but in the calm serenity with which he formed his judgments and laid his plans, in the undismayed firmness with which he adhered to them in the face of popular clamour, of conflicting counsels from his advisers, sometimes, even, of what others deemed all but hopeless failure. These were the qualities needed in one who had to pilot the Republic through the heaviest storm that had ever broken upon it.

But the mainspring of his power, and the truest evidence of his greatness, lay in the nobility of his aims, in the fervour of his conviction, in the stainless rectitude which guided his action and won for him the confidence of the people. Without these things neither the vigour of his intellect nor the firmness of his will could have availed.

There is a vulgar saying that all great men are unscrupulous. Of him it may rather be said that the note of greatness we feel in his thinking and his speech and his conduct had its source in the loftiness and purity of his character. Lincoln's is one of the careers that refute this imputation on human nature.

—*James Bryce*

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A MUNICIPAL REPORT

The cities are full of pride,
  Challenging each to each—
This from her mountainside,
  That from her burthened beach.
R. Kipling

Fancy a novel about Chicago or Buffalo, let us say, or Nashville, Tennessee! There are just three big cities in the United States that are "story cities"—New York, of course, New Orleans, and, best of the lot, San Francisco.—*Frank Norris*

East is East, and West is San Francisco, according to Californians. Californians are a race of people; they are not merely inhabitants of a State. They are the Southerners of the West. Now, Chicagoans are no less loyal to their city; but when you ask them why, they stammer and speak of lake fish and the new Odd Fellows Building. But Californians go into detail.

Of course they have, in the climate, an argument that is good for half an hour while you are thinking of your coal bills and heavy underwear. But as soon as they come to mistake your silence for conviction, madness comes upon them, and they picture the city of the Golden Gate as the Bagdad of the New World. So far, as a matter of opinion, no refutation is necessary. But, dear cousins all (from Adam and Eve descended), it is a rash one who will lay his finger on the map and say: "In this town there can be no romance—what could happen here?" Yes, it is a bold and a rash deed to challenge in one sentence history, romance, and Rand and McNally.

NASHVILLE.—A city, port of delivery, and the capital of the State of Tennessee, is on the Cumberland River and on the N.C. & St. L. and the L. & N. railroads. This city is regarded as the most important educational centre in the South.

I stepped off the train at 8 p.m. Having searched the thesaurus in vain for adjectives, I must, as a substitution, hie me to comparison in the form of a recipe.

Take of London fog 30 parts; malaria 10 parts; gas leaks 20 parts; dewdrops gathered in a brick yard at sunrise, 25 parts; odour of honeysuckle 15 parts. Mix.

The mixture will give you an approximate conception of a Nashville drizzle. It is not so fragrant as a moth-ball nor as thick as pea-soup; but 'tis enough—'twill serve.

I went to the hotel in a tumbril. It required strong self-suppression for me to keep from climbing to the top of it and giving an imitation of Sidney Carton. The vehicle was drawn by beasts of a bygone era and driven by something dark and emancipated.

I was sleepy and tired, so when I got to the hotel I hurriedly paid it the fifty cents it demanded (with approximate laggniappe, I assure you). I knew its habits; and I did not want to hear it prate about its old "marster" or anything that happened "befo' de wah."

The hotel was one of the kind described as "renovated." That means $20,000 worth of new marble pillars, tiling, electric lights and brass cuspidors in the lobby, and a new L. & N. time table and a lithograph of Lookout Mountain in each one of the great rooms above. The management was without reproach, the attention full of exquisite Southern courtesy, the service as slow as the progress of a snail and as good-humoured as Rip Van Winkle. The food was worth travelling a thousand miles for. There is no other hotel in the world where you can get such chicken livers *en brochette*.

At dinner I asked a negro waiter if there was any-

thing doing in town. He pondered gravely for a minute, and then replied: "Well, boss, I don't really reckon there's anything at all doin' after sundown."

Sundown had been accomplished; it had been drowned in the drizzle long before. So that spectacle was denied me. But I went forth upon the streets in the drizzle to see what might be there.

It is built on undulating grounds; and the streets are lighted by electricity at a cost of $32,470 per annum.

As I left the hotel there was a race riot. Down upon me charged a company of freedmen, or Arabs, or Zulus, armed with—no, I saw with relief that they were not rifles, but whips. And I saw dimly a caravan of black, clumsy vehicles; and at the reassuring shouts, "Kyar you anywhere in the town, boss, fuh fifty cents," I reasoned that I was merely a "fare" instead of a victim.

I walked through long streets, all leading uphill. I wondered how those streets ever came down again. Perhaps they didn't until they were "graded." On a few of the "main streets" I saw lights in stores here and there; saw street cars go by conveying worthy burghers hither and yon; saw people pass engaged in the art of conversation, and heard a burst of semi-lively laughter issuing from a soda-water and ice-cream parlour. The streets other than "main" seemed to have enticed upon their borders houses consecrated to peace and domesticity. In many of them lights shone behind discreetly drawn window shades; in a few pianos tinkled orderly and irreproachable music. There was, indeed, little "doing." I wished I had come before sundown. So I returned to my hotel.

In November, 1864, the Confederate General Hood advanced against Nashville, where he shut up a National force under General Thomas. The latter then sallied forth and defeated the Confederates in a terrible conflict.

All my life I have heard of, admired, and witnessed the fine marksmanship of the South in its peaceful conflicts in the tobacco-chewing regions. But in my hotel a surprise awaited me. There were twelve bright, new, imposing, capacious brass cuspidors in the great lobby, tall enough to be called urns, and so wide-mouthed that the crack pitcher of a lady baseball team should have been able to throw a ball into one of them at five paces distant. But, although a terrible battle had raged and was still raging, the enemy had not suffered. Bright, new, imposing, capacious, untouched, they stood. But shades of Jefferson Brick! the tile floor—the beautiful tile floor! I could not avoid thinking of the battle of Nashville, and trying to draw, as is my foolish habit, some deductions about hereditary marksmanship.

Here I first saw Major (by misplaced courtesy) Wentworth Caswell. I knew him for a type the moment my eyes suffered from the sight of him. A rat has no geographical habitat. My old friend, A. Tennyson, said, as he so well said almost everything:

> "Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,
> And curse me the British vermin, the rat."

Let us regard the word "British" as interchangeable *ad lib.* A rat is a rat.

This man was hunting about the hotel lobby like a starved dog that had forgotten where he had buried a bone. He had a face of great acreage, red, pulpy, and with a kind of sleepy massiveness like that of Buddha. He possessed one single virtue—he was very smoothly shaven. The mark of the beast is not indelible upon a man until he goes about with a stubble. I think that if he had not used his razor that day I would have repulsed his advances, and the criminal calendar of the world would have been spared the addition of one murder.

I happened to be standing within five feet of a cuspidor when Major Caswell opened fire upon it. I had been observant enough to perceive that the attacking force was using Gatlings instead of squirrel rifles; so I side-stepped so promptly that the major seized the opportunity to apologize to a noncombatant. He had the blabbing lip. In four minutes he had become my friend and had dragged me to the bar.

I desire to interpolate here that I am a Southerner. But I am not one by profession or trade. I eschew the string tie, the slouch hat, the Prince Albert, the number of bales of cotton destroyed by Sherman, and plug chewing. When the orchestra plays Dixie I do not cheer. I slide a little lower on the leather-cornered seat and, well, order another Wurzburger and wish that Longstreet had—but what's the use?

Major Caswell banged the bar with his fist, and the first gun at Fort Sumter re-echoed. When he fired the last one at Appomattox I began to hope. But then he began on family trees, and demonstrated that Adam was only a third cousin of a collateral branch of the Caswell family. Genealogy disposed of, he took up, to my distaste, his private family matters. He spoke of his wife, traced her descent back to Eve, and profanely denied any possible rumour that she may have had relations in the land of Nod.

By this time I began to suspect that he was trying to obscure by noise the fact that he had ordered the drinks, on the chance that I would be bewildered into paying for them. But when they were down he crashed a silver dollar loudly upon the bar. Then, of course, another serving was obligatory. And when I had paid for that I took leave of him brusquely; for I wanted no more of him. But before I had obtained my release

he had prated loudly of an income that his wife received, and showed a handful of silver money.

When I got my key at the desk the clerk said to me courteously: "If that man Caswell has annoyed you, and if you would like to make a complaint, we will have him ejected. He is a nuisance, a loafer, and without any known means of support, although he seems to have some money most the time. But we don't seem to be able to hit upon any means of throwing him out legally."

"Why, no," said I, after some reflection; "I don't see my way clear to making a complaint. But I would like to place myself on record as asserting that I do not care for his company. Your town," I continued, "seems to be a quiet one. What manner of entertainment, adventure, or excitement have you to offer to the stranger within your gates?"

"Well, sir," said the clerk, "there will be a show here next Thursday. It is—I'll look it up and have the announcement sent up to your room with the ice water. Good night."

After I went up to my room I looked out of the window. It was only about ten o'clock, but I looked upon a silent town. The drizzle continued, spangled with dim lights, as far apart as currants in a cake sold at the Ladies' Exchange.

"A quiet place," I said to myself, as my first shoe struck the ceiling of the occupant of the room beneath mine. "Nothing of the life here that gives colour and variety to the cities in the East and West. Just a good, ordinary, humdrum business town.

Nashville occupies a foremost place among the manufacturing centres of the country. It is the fifth boot and shoe market in the United States, the largest candy and cracker manufacturing city in the South, and does an enormous wholesale drygoods, grocery, and drug business.

I must tell you how I came to be in Nashville, and assure you the digression brings as much tedium to me as it does to you. I was travelling elsewhere on my own business, but I had a commission from a Northern literary magazine to stop over there and establish a personal connection between the publication and one of its contributors, Azalea Adair.

Adair (there was no clue to the personality except the handwriting) had sent in some essays (lost art!) and poems that had made the editors swear approvingly over their one o'clock luncheon. So they had commissioned me to round up said Adair and corner by contract his or her output at two cents a word before some other publisher offered her ten or twenty.

At nine o'clock the next morning, after my chicken livers *en brochette* (try them if you can find that hotel), I strayed out into the drizzle, which was still on for an unlimited run. At the first corner I came upon Uncle Cæsar. He was a stalwart negro, older than the pyramids, with grey wool and a face that reminded me of Brutus, and a second afterwards of the late King Cettiwayo. He wore the most remarkable coat that I ever had seen or expect to see. It reached to his ankles and had once been a Confederate grey in colours. But rain and sun and age had so variegated it that Joseph's coat, beside it, would have faded to a pale monochrome. I must linger with that coat, for it has to do with the story—the story that is so long in coming, because you can hardly expect anything to happen at Nashville.

Once it must have been the military coat of an officer. The cape of it had vanished, but all adown its front it had been frogged and tasselled magnificently. But now the frogs and tassels were gone. In their stead had been patiently stitched (I surmised by some sur-

viving "black mammy") new frogs made of cunningly twisted common hempen twine. This twine was frayed and dishevelled. It must have been added to the coat as a substitute for vanished splendours, with tasteless but painstaking devotion, for it followed faithfully the curves of the long-missing frogs. And, to complete the comedy and pathos of the garment, all its buttons were gone save one. The second button from the top alone remained. The coat was fastened by other twine strings tied through the button-holes and other holes rudely pierced in the opposite side. There was never such a weird garment so fantastically bedecked and of so many mottled hues. The lone button was the size of a half-dollar, made of yellow horn and sewed on with coarse twine.

This negro stood by a carriage so old that Ham himself might have started a hack line with it after he left the ark with the two animals hitched to it. As I approached he threw open the door, drew out a leather duster, waved it without using it, and said in deep, rumbling tones:

"Step right in, suh; ain't a speck of dust in it—jus' got back from a funeral, suh."

I inferred that on such gala occasions carriages were given an extra cleaning. I looked up and down the street and perceived that there was little choice among the vehicles for hire that lined the kerb. I looked in my memorandum book for the address of Azalea Adair.

"I want to go to 861 Jessamine Street," I said, and was about to step into the hack. But for an instant the thick, long, gorilla-like arm of the old negro barred me. On his massive and saturnine face a look of sudden suspicion and enmity flashed for a moment. Then, with

quickly-returning conviction, he asked blandishingly: "What are you gwine there for, boss?"

"What is that to you?" I asked, a little sharply.

"Nothin', suh, jus' nothin'. Only it's a lonesome kind of part of town and few folks ever has business out there Step right in. The seats is clean—jes' got back from a funeral, suh."

A mile and a half it must have been to our journey's end. I could hear nothing but the fearful rattle of the ancient hack over the uneven brick paving; I could smell nothing but the drizzle, now further flavoured with coal smoke and something like a mixture of tar and oleander blossoms. All I could see through the streaming windows were two rows of dim houses.

The city has an area of 10 square miles; 181 miles of streets, of which 137 miles are paved; a system of waterworks that cost $2,000,000, with 77 miles of mains.

Eight-sixty-one Jessamine Street was a decayed mansion. Thirty yards back from the street it stood, outmerged in a splendid grove of trees and untrimmed shrubbery. A row of box bushes overflowed and almost hid the paling fence from sight; the gate was kept closed by a rope noose that encircled the gate-post and the first paling of the gate. But when you got inside you saw that 861 was a shell, a shadow, a ghost of former grandeur and excellence. But in the story, I have not yet got inside.

When the hack had ceased from rattling and the weary quadrupeds came to a rest I handed my jehu his fifty cents with an additional quarter, feeling a glow of conscious generosity as I did so. He refused it.

"It's two dollars, suh," he said.

"How's that?" I asked. "I plainly heard you call out at the hotel: 'Fifty cents to any part of the town.'"

"It's two dollars, suh," he repeated obstinately. "It's a long ways from the hotel."

"It is within the city limits and well within them," I argued. "Don't think that you have picked up a greenhorn Yankee. Do you see those hills over there?" I went on, pointing toward the east (I could not see them, myself, for the drizzle); "well, I was born and raised on their other side. You old fool nigger, can't you tell people from other people when you see 'em?"

The grim face of King Cettiwayo softened. "Is you from the South, suh? I reckon it was them shoes of yourn fooled me. There is somethin' sharp in the toes for a Southern gen'l'man to wear."

"Then the charge is fifty cents, I suppose?" said I inexorably.

His former expression, a mingling of cupidity and hostility, returned, remained ten seconds, and vanished.

"Boss," he said, "fifty cents is right; but I *needs* two dollars, suh; I'm *obleeged* to have two dollars. I ain't *demandin'* it now, suh; after I knows whar you's from; I'm jus' sayin' that I *has* to have two dollars to-night, and business is mighty po'."

Peace and confidence settled upon his heavy features. He had been luckier than he had hoped. Instead of having picked up a greenhorn, ignorant of rates, he had come upon an inheritance.

"You confounded old rascal," I said, reaching down into my pocket, "you ought to be turned over to the police."

For the first time I saw him smile. He knew; *he knew;* HE KNEW.

I gave him two one-dollar bills. As I handed them over I noticed that one of them had seen parlous times. Its upper right-hand corner was missing, and it had been

torn through in the middle, but joined again. A strip of blue tissue paper, pasted over the split, preserved its negotiability.

Enough of the African bandit for the present: I left him happy, lifted the rope and opened the creaky gate.

The house, as I said, was a shell. A paint brush had not touched it in twenty years. I could not see why a strong wind should not have bowled it over like a house of cards until I looked again at the trees that hugged it close—the trees that saw the battle of Nashville and still drew their protecting branches around it against storm and enemy and cold.

Azalea Adair, fifty years old, white-haired, a descendant of the cavaliers, as thin and frail as the house she lived in, robed in the cheapest and cleanest dress I ever saw, with an air as simple as a queen's, received me.

The reception-room seemed a mile square, because there was nothing in it except some rows of books, on unpainted white-pine bookshelves, a cracked marble-top table, a rag rug, a hairless horsehair sofa, and two or three chairs. Yes, there was a picture on the wall, a coloured crayon drawing of a cluster of pansies. I looked around for the portrait of Andrew Jackson and the pine-cone hanging basket, but they were not there.

Azalea Adair and I had conversation, a little of which will be repeated to you. She was a product of the old South, gently nurtured in the sheltered life. Her learning was not broad, but was deep and of splendid originality in its somewhat narrow scope. She had been educated at home, and her knowledge of the world was derived from inference and by inspiration. Of such is the precious, small group of essayists made. While she talked to me I kept brushing my fingers, trying, unconsciously, to rid them guiltily of the absent dust from the

half-calf backs of Lamb, Chaucer, Hazlitt, Marcus Aurelius, Montaigne, and Hood. She was exquisite, she was a valuable discovery. Nearly everybody nowadays knows too much—oh, so much too much—of real life.

I could perceive clearly that Azalea Adair was very poor. A house and a dress she had, not much else, I fancied. So, divided between my duty to the magazine and my loyalty to the poets and essayists who fought Thomas in the valley of the Cumberland, I listened to her voice, which was like a harpsichord's, and found that I could not speak of contracts. In the presence of the nine Muses and the three Graces one hesitated to lower the topic to two cents. There would have to be another colloquy after I had regained my commercialism. But I spoke of my mission, and three o'clock of the next afternoon was set for the discussion of the business proposition.

"Your town," I said, as I began to make ready to depart (which is the time for smooth generalities), "seems to be a quiet, sedate place. A home town, I should say, where few things out of the ordinary ever happen."

It carries on an extensive trade in stoves and hollow ware with the West and South, and its flouring mills have a daily capacity of more than 2,000 barrels.

Azalea Adair seemed to reflect.

"I have never thought of it that way," she said, with a kind of sincere intensity that seemed to belong to her. "Isn't it in the still, quiet places that things do happen? I fancy that when God began to create the earth on the first Monday morning one could have leaned out one's windows and heard the drop of mud splashing from His trowel as He built up the everlasting hills. What did the noisiest project in the world—I mean the

building of the tower of Babel—result in finally? A page and a half of Esperanto in the *North American Review.*"

"Of course," said I platitudinously, "human nature is the same everywhere; but there is more colour—er—more drama and movement and—er—romance in some cities than in others."

"On the surface," said Azalea Adair. "I have travelled many times around the world in a golden airship wafted on two wings—print and dreams. I have seen (on one of my imaginary tours) the Sultan of Turkey bowstring with his own hands one of his wives who had uncovered her face in public. I have seen a man in Nashville tear up his theatre tickets because his wife was going out with her face covered—with rice powder. In San Francisco's Chinatown I saw the slave girl Sing Yee dipped slowly, inch by inch, in boiling almond oil to make her swear she would never see her American lover again. She gave in when the boiling oil had reached three inches above her knee. At a euchre party in East Nashville the other night I saw Kitty Morgan cut dead by seven of her schoolmates and lifelong friends because she had married a house painter. The boiling oil was sizzling as high as her heart; but I wish you could have seen the fine little smile that she carried from table to table. Oh, yes, it is a humdrum town. Just a few miles of red-brick houses and mud and stores and lumber yards."

Some one knocked hollowly at the back of the house. Azalea Adair breathed a soft apology and went to investigate the sound. She came back in three minutes with brightened eyes, a faint flush on her cheeks, and ten years lifted from her shoulders.

"You must have a cup of tea before you go," she said, "and a sugar cake."

She reached and shook a little iron bell. In shuffled a small negro girl about twelve, barefoot, not very tidy, glowering at me with thumb in mouth and bulging eyes.

Azalea Adair opened a tiny, worn purse and drew out a dollar bill, a dollar bill with the upper right-hand corner missing, torn in two pieces and pasted together again with a strip of blue tissue paper. It was one of the bills I had given the piratical negro—there was no doubt of it.

"Go up to Mr. Baker's store on the corner, Impy," she said, handing the girl the dollar bill, "and get me a quarter of a pound of tea—the kind he always sends me —and ten cents' worth of sugar cakes. Now hurry. The supply of tea in the house happens to be exhausted," she explained to me.

Impy left by the back way. Before the scrape of her hard, bare feet had died away on the back porch, a wild shriek—I was sure it was hers—filled the hollow house. Then the deep, gruff tones of an angry man's voice mingled with the girl's further squeals and unintelligible words.

Azalea Adair rose without surprise or emotion and disappeared. For two minutes I heard the hoarse rumble of the man's voice; then something like an oath and a light scuffle, and she returned calmly to her chair.

"This is a roomy house," she said, "and I have a tenant for part of it. I am sorry to have to rescind my invitation to tea. It was impossible to get the kind I always use at the store. Perhaps to-morrow Mr. Baker will be able to supply me."

I was sure that Impy had not had time to leave the

house. I inquired concerning street-car lines and took my leave. After I was well on my way I remembered that I had not learned Azalea Adair's name. But to-morrow would do.

That same day I started in on the course of iniquity that this uneventful city forced upon me. I was in the town only two days, but in that time I managed to lie shamelessly by telegraph, and to be an accomplice—after the fact, if that is the correct legal term—to a murder.

As I rounded the corner nearest my hotel the Afrite coachman of the polychromatic, nonpareil coat seized me, swung open the dungeony door of his peripatetic sarcophagus, flirted his feather duster and began his ritual: "Step right in, boss. Carriage is clean—jus' got back from a funeral. Fifty cents to any—"

And then he knew me and grinned broadly. "'Scuse me, boss; you is de gen'l'man what rid out with me dis mawnin'. Thank you kindly, suh."

"I am going out to 861 again to-morrow afternoon at three," said I, "and if you will be here, I'll let you drive me. So you know Miss Adair?" I concluded, thinking of my dollar bill.

"I belonged to her father, Judge Adair, suh," he replied.

"I judge that she is pretty poor," I said. "She hasn't much money to speak of, has she?"

For an instant I looked again at the fierce countenance of King Cettiwayo, and then he changed back to an extortionate old negro hack driver.

"She a'n't gwine to starve, suh," he said slowly. "She has reso'ces, suh; she has reso'ces."

"I shall pay you fifty cents for the trip," said I.

"Dat is puffeckly correct, suh," he answered humbly. "I jus' *had* to have dat two dollars dis mawnin', boss."

I went to the hotel and lied by electricity. I wired the magazine: "A. Adair holds out for eight cents a word."

The answer that came back was: "Give it to her quick, you duffer."

Just before dinner "Major" Wentworth Caswell bore down upon me with the greetings of a long-lost friend. I have seen few men whom I have so instantaneously hated, and of whom it was so difficult to be rid. I was standing at the bar when he invaded me; therefore I could not wave the white ribbon in his face. I would have paid gladly for the drinks, hoping, thereby, to escape another; but he was one of those despicable, roaring, advertising bibbers who must have brass bands and fireworks attend upon every cent that they waste in their follies.

With an air of producing millions he drew two one-dollar bills from a pocket and dashed one of them upon the bar. I looked once more at the dollar bill with the upper right-hand corner missing, torn through the middle, and patched with a strip of blue tissue paper. It was my dollar bill again. It could have been no other.

I went up to my room. The drizzle and the monotony of a dreary, eventless Southern town had made me tired and listless. I remember that just before I went to bed I mentally disposed of the mysterious dollar bill (which might have formed the clue to a tremendously fine detective story of San Francisco) by saying to myself sleepily: "Seems as if a lot of people here own stock in the Hack-Driver's Trust. Pays dividends promptly, too. Wonder if—" Then I fell asleep.

King Cettiwayo was at his post the next day, and rattled my bones over the stones out to 861. He was to wait and rattle me back again when I was ready.

Azalea Adair looked paler and cleaner and frailer than she had looked the day before. After she had signed the contract at eight cents per word she grew still paler and began to slip out of her chair. Without much trouble I managed to get her up on the ante-diluvian horsehair sofa and then I ran out to the side-walk and yelled to the coffee-coloured Pirate to bring a doctor. With a wisdom that I had not suspected in him, he abandoned his team and struck off up the street afoot, realizing the value of speed. In ten minutes he returned with a grave, grey-haired, and capable man of medicine. In a few words (worth much less than eight cents each) I explained to him my presence in the hollow house of mystery. He bowed with stately understanding, and turned to the old negro.

"Uncle Cæsar," he said calmly, "run up to my house and ask Miss Lucy to give you a cream pitcher full of fresh milk and half a tumbler of port wine. And hurry back. Don't drive—run. I want you to get back sometime this week."

It occurred to me that Dr. Merriman also felt a distrust as to the speeding powers of the land-pirate's steeds. After Uncle Cæsar was gone, lumberingly, but swiftly, up the street, the doctor looked me over with great politeness and as much careful calculation until he had decided that I might do.

"It is only a case of insufficient nutrition," he said. "In other words, the result of poverty, pride, and starvation. Mrs. Caswell has many devoted friends who would be glad to aid her, but she will accept nothing

except from that old negro, Uncle Cæsar, who was once owned by her family."

"Mrs. Caswell!" said I, in surprise. And then I looked at the contract and saw that she had signed it "Azalea Adair Caswell."

"I thought she was Miss Adair," I said.

"Married to a drunken, worthless loafer, sir," said the doctor. "It is said that he robs her even of the small sums that her old servant contributes toward her support."

When the milk and wine had been brought, the doctor soon revived Azalea Adair. She sat up and talked of the beauty of the autumn leaves that were then in season, and their height of colour. She referred lightly to her fainting seizure as the outcome of an old palpitation of the heart. Impy fanned her as she lay on the sofa. The doctor was due elsewhere, and I followed him to the door. I told him that it was within my power and intentions to make a reasonable advance of money to Azalea Adair on future contributions to the magazine, and he seemed pleased.

"By the way," he said, "perhaps you would like to know that you have had royalty for a coachman. Old Cæsar's grandfather was a king in Congo. Cæsar himself has royal ways, as you may have observed."

As the doctor was moving off I heard Uncle Cæsar's voice inside: "Did he git bofe of dem two dollars from you, Mis' Zalea?"

"Yes, Cæsar," I heard Azalea Adair answer weakly. And then I went in and concluded business negotiations with our contributor. I assumed the responsibility of advancing fifty dollars, putting it as a necessary formality in binding our bargain. And then Uncle Cæsar drove me back to the hotel.

Here ends all of the story as far as I can testify as a witness. The rest must be only bare statements of facts.

At about six o'clock I went out for a stroll. Uncle Cæsar was at his corner. He threw open the door of his carriage, flourished his duster and began his depressing formula: "Step right in, suh. Fifty cents to anywhere in the city—hack's puffickly clean, suh—jus' got back from a funeral—"

And then he recognized me. I think his eyesight was getting bad. His coat had taken on a few more faded shades of colour, the twine strings were more frayed and ragged, the last remaining button—the button of yellow horn—was gone. A motley descendant of kings was Uncle Cæsar!

About two hours later I saw an excited crowd besieging the front of a drug store. In a desert where nothing happens this was manna; so I edged my way inside. On an extemporized couch of empty boxes and chairs was stretched the mortal corporeality of Major Wentworth Caswell. A doctor was testing him for the immortal ingredient. His decision was that it was conspicuous by its absence.

The erstwhile Major had been found dead on a dark street and brought by curious and ennuied citizens to the drug store. The late human being had been engaged in terrific battle—the details showed that. Loafer and reprobate though he had been, he had been also a warrior. But he had lost. His hands were yet clenched so tightly that his fingers would not be opened. The gentle citizens who had known him, stood about and searched their vocabularies to find some good word, if it were possible, to speak of him. One kind-looking man said, after much thought: "When 'Cas'

was about fo'teen he was one of the best spellers in school."

While I stood there the fingers of the right hand of "the man that was," which hung down the side of a white pine box, relaxed, and dropped something at my feet. I covered it with one foot quietly, and a little later on I picked it up and pocketed it. I reasoned that in his last struggle his hand must have seized that object unwittingly and held it in a death grip.

At the hotel that night the main topic of conversation, with the possible exception of politics and prohibition, was the demise of Major Caswell. I heard one man say to a group of listeners:

"In my opinion, gentlemen, Caswell was murdered by some of these no-account niggers for his money. He had fifty dollars this afternoon which he showed to several gentlemen in the hotel. When he was found the money was not on his person."

I left the city the next morning at nine, and as the train was crossing the bridge over the Cumberland River I took out of my pocket a yellow horn overcoat button the size of a fifty-cent piece, with frayed ends of coarse twine hanging from it, and cast it out of the window into the slow, muddy waters below.

I wonder what's doing in Buffalo!

—*William Sydney Porter ("O. Henry")*

From "Strictly Business"
By permission of Doubleday, Doran & Gundy, Toronto

The love that is given to ships is profoundly different from the love men feel for every other work of their hands—the love they bear to their houses, for instance—because it is untainted by the pride of possession. The pride of skill, the pride of responsibility, the pride of endurance there may be, but otherwise it is a disinterested sentiment. No seaman ever cherished a ship, even if she belonged to him, merely because of the profit she put in his pocket. No one, I think, ever did; for a ship-owner, even of the best, has always been outside the pale of that sentiment embracing in a feeling of intimate, equal fellowship the ship and the man, backing each other against the implacable, if sometimes dissembled, hostility of their world of waters. The sea—this truth must be confessed—has no generosity. No display of manly qualities—courage, hardihood, endurance, faithfulness—has ever been known to touch its irresponsible consciousness of power. The ocean has the conscienceless temper of a savage autocrat spoiled by much adulation. He cannot brook the slightest appearance of defiance, and has remained the irreconcilable enemy of ships and men ever since ships and men had the unheard-of audacity to go afloat together in the face of his frown. From that day he has gone on swallowing up fleets and men without his resentment being glutted by the number of victims—by so many wrecked ships and wrecked lives. To-day, as ever, he is ready to beguile and betray, to smash and to drown the incorrigible optimism of men who, backed by the fidelity of ships, are trying to wrest from him

the fortune of their house, the dominion of their world, or only a dole of food for their hunger. If not always in the hot mood to smash, he is always stealthily ready for a drowning. The most amazing wonder of the deep is its unfathomable cruelty.

I felt its dread for the first time in mid-Atlantic one day, many years ago, when we took off the crew of a Danish brig homeward bound from the West Indies. A thin, silvery mist softened the calm and majestic splendour of light without shadows—seemed to render the sky less remote and the ocean less immense. It was one of the days when the might of the sea appears indeed lovable, like the nature of a strong man in moments of quiet intimacy. At sunrise we had made out a black speck to the westward, apparently suspended high up in the void behind a stirring, shimmering veil of silvery blue gauze that seemed at times to stir and float in the breeze which fanned us slowly along. The peace of that enchanting forenoon was so profound, so untroubled, that it seemed that every word pronounced loudly on our deck would penetrate to the very heart of that infinite mystery born from the conjunction of water and sky. We did not raise our voices. "A water-logged derelict, I think, sir," said the second officer quietly, coming down from aloft with the binoculars in their case slung across his shoulders; and our captain, without a word, signed for the helmsman to steer for the black speck. Presently we made out a low, jagged stump sticking up forward—all that remained of her departed masts.

The captain was expatiating in a low conversational tone to the chief mate upon the danger of these derelicts, and upon his dread of coming upon them at night, when suddenly a man forward screamed out, "There's people on board of her, sir! I see them!" in a most extra-

ordinary voice—a voice never heard before in our ship; the amazing voice of a stranger. It gave the signal for a sudden tumult of shouts. The watch below ran up the forecastle head in a body, the cook dashed out of the galley. Everybody saw the poor fellows now. They were there! And all at once our ship, which had the well-earned name of being without a rival for speed in light winds, seemed to us to have lost the power of motion, as if the sea, becoming viscous, had clung to her sides. And yet she moved. Immensity, the inseparable companion of a ship's life, chose that day to breathe upon her as gently as a sleeping child. The clamour of our excitement had died out, and our living ship, famous for never losing steerage way as long as there was air enough to float a feather, stole, without a ripple, silent and white as a ghost, towards her mutilated and wounded sister, come upon at the point of death in the sunlit haze of a calm sea.

With the binoculars glued to his eyes, the captain said in a quavering tone: "They are waving to us with something aft there." He put down the glasses on the skylight brusquely, and began to walk about the poop. "A shirt or a flag," he ejaculated irritably. "Can't make it out . . . some damn rag or other!" He took a few more turns on the poop, glancing down over the rail now and then to see how fast we were moving. His nervous footsteps rang sharply in the quiet of the ship, where the other men, all looking the same way, had forgotten themselves in a staring immobility. "This will never do!" he cried out suddenly. "Lower the boats at once! Down with them!"

Before I jumped into mine he took me aside, as being an inexperienced junior, for a word of warning:

"You look out as you come alongside that she doesn't take you down with her. You understand?"

He murmured this confidentially, so that none of the men at the falls should overhear, and I was shocked. "Heavens! as if in such an emergency one stopped to think of danger!" I exclaimed to myself mentally, in scorn of such cold-blooded caution.

It takes many lessons to make a real seaman, and I got my rebuke at once. My experienced commander seemed in one searching glance to read my thoughts on my ingenuous face.

"What you're going for is to save life, not to drown your boat's crew for nothing," he growled severely in my ear. But as we shoved off he leaned over and cried out: "It all rests on the power of your arms, men. Give way for life!"

We made a race of it, and I would never have believed that a common boat's crew of a merchantman could keep up so much determined fierceness in the regular swing of their stroke. What our captain had clearly perceived before we left had become plain to all of us since. The issue of our enterprise hung on a hair above that abyss of waters which will not give up its dead till the Day of Judgment. It was a race of two ship's boats matched against Death for a prize of nine men's lives, and Death had a long start. We saw the crew of the brig from afar working at the pumps—still pumping on that wreck, which already had settled so far down that the gentle, low swell, over which our boats rose and fell easily without a check to their speed, welling up almost level with her head-rails, plucked at the ends of broken gear swinging desolately under her naked bowsprit.

We could not, in all conscience, have picked out a better day for our regatta had we had the free choice of

all the days that ever dawned upon the lonely struggles and solitary agonies of ships since the Norse rovers first steered to the westward against the run of Atlantic waves. It was a very good race. At the finish there was not an oar's length between the first and second boat, with Death coming in a good third on the top of the very next smooth swell, for all we knew to the contrary. The scuppers of the brig gurgled softly all together when the water rising against her sides subsided sleepily with a low wash, as if playing about an immovable rock. Her bulwarks were gone fore and aft, and one saw her bare deck low-lying like a raft and swept clean of boats, spars, houses—of everything except the ring-bolts and the heads of the pumps. I had one dismal glimpse of it as I braced myself up to receive upon my breast the last man to leave her, the captain, who literally let himself fall into my arms.

It had been a weirdly silent rescue—a rescue without a hail, without a single uttered word, without a gesture or a sign, without a conscious exchange of glances. Up to the very last moment those on board stuck to their pumps, which spouted two clear streams of water upon their bare feet. Their brown skin showed through the rents of their shirts; and the two small bunches of half-naked, tattered men went on bowing from the waist to each other in their back-breaking labour, up and down, absorbed, with no time for a glance over the shoulder at the help that was coming to them. As we dashed, unregarded, alongside a voice let out one hoarse howl of command, and then, just as they stood, without caps, with the salt drying grey in the wrinkles and folds of their hairy, haggard faces, blinking stupidly at us their red eyelids, they made a bolt away from the handles, tottering and jostling against each other, and positively flung

themselves over upon our very heads. The clatter they made tumbling into the boats had an extraordinarily destructive effect upon the illusion of tragic dignity our self-esteem had thrown over the contests of mankind with the sea. On that exquisite day of gently breathing peace and veiled sunshine perished my romantic love to what men's imagination had proclaimed the most august aspect of Nature. The cynical indifference of the sea to the merits of human suffering and courage, laid bare in this ridiculous, panic-tainted performance extorted from the dire extremity of nine good and honourable seamen, revolted me. I saw the duplicity of the sea's most tender mood. It was so because it could not help itself, but the awed respect of the early days was gone. I felt ready to smile bitterly at its enchanting charm and glare viciously at its furies. In a moment, before we shoved off, I had looked coolly at the life of my choice. Its illusions were gone, but its fascination remained. I had become a seaman at last.

—*Joseph Conrad*

From "The Mirror of the Sea"
By permission of the Estate of the late Joseph Conrad

THE ART OF HOLIDAY

It matters very little where you go, or when you go; it matters little what you do. The thing itself matters; and that thing is holiday—the break from the monotony of routine and the discipline of earning a living. To get away, to be free for a brief spell, to feel that you have not to get up at the appointed hour, to know that you can linger over your breakfast, to realize that the usual business train will depart without you, to look upon new scenes and strange faces, to breathe fresh air, to hear different sounds, to do different things, or better still, to do nothing at all—that is holiday. Fix upon a place, no matter what place, anywhere; put a few things into a bag, the fewer the better, and go. The change, I repeat, is the thing; scenery or amusements hardly count in this great business, for unless a man carry all the beauty of the world in his own mind, and all the joy of life in his own heart, he will not find them elsewhere. I have small sympathy with those wide-eyed enthusiasts who babble about spirit of place. Unless we carry the spirit of place within us as a part of our personal kit, we shall not find it elsewhere. We are joy and sorrow, and the world about us but material for their expression.

I doubt whether there are any sound rules for holiday-making, save that one which I have called change; and that after all is not arbitrary—it is fundamental. A holiday is no holiday unless you have change. The health of the human mind is stimulated by change of scene just as change of air is a tonic for the body. Change is good physic for all social pursuits; without it we get

stale, and to get stale is to lose caste, to become inferior. More than half the pleasure we have in contemplating a holiday is, I believe, born of the instinct of change. But change is not merely the transference of oneself and one's family from one place to another. Far too many people court disappointment by that interpretation every year. To go away with your family is, in a great many instances, nothing but an elaborate contrivance for staying at home. I know nothing more depressing, with the possible exception of a debate in the House of Commons, than the sight of so many family groups at the seaside during the holiday season who are obviously bored past murmuring. These well-intentioned people are suffering from social starvation. They have change of air, change of scene, and change of some habits, but possessing all these and lacking change of society, they lack everything that makes for a successful holiday. Family life is an invaluable and delightful thing, and deservedly one of our most treasured institutions; for that very reason I am always being startled into surprise because we do not take much more care of it. One of the easiest ways of taking care of it is to break it up occasionally, and the best time for that operation would seem to be the annual holiday. But far from recognizing this, the majority of people prefer to translate their family, personalities, habits, and associations to a holiday resort. Such proceeding can only be successful by accident, for the simple reason that the family does not leave home, it takes home away with it. Which is a direct violation of the fundamental law of change.

But change, though important, is not inclusive. There are other and more subtle ingredients for a real holiday. These, however, vary with the individual, and provided that you have the necessary facilities it

matters little what you do so long, of course, as you do what you like. Generally speaking, and if you are wise, you will leave things to chance. To map out a holiday, with times and places all catalogued and certified, with a list of things to see and how to see them, does, I know, please many people, but all such elaborate methods are dangerously akin to routine, and routine is useful only to those who cannot do without it. I once knew a man who was taking a holiday on the Yorkshire moors. He would walk about all day in an old suit of clothes, occasionally resting on the grey old stone walls of the wolds, or lolling in the heather, smoking an old pipe, talking to any chance acquaintance, and when hungry he would call at a wayside inn and refresh himself before once again taking up the great business of loafing. But one day he had an experience which ever afterwards he looked back at with a thrill of delight. Loafing down a moorside one morning, he came across a gang of navvies digging a big hole in the earth. He watched them for awhile, then, fascinated by the swing and rhythm of their labour, he jumped into the hole, and, after a few words of explanation, borrowed a shovel and a pick and spent the rest of the day in manual labour, resting at midday with the navvies, and eating their rough-and-ready food. Then he sauntered to his inn, dog-tired, but as happy as a god. That man got more out of his holidays than any man I have known. But he never made any fuss about it; indeed, he never called his holidays by that name. He used just to throw a few things into an old battered rucksack and disappear. He never used a map or itinerary of any sort; he simply disappeared, reappearing again in due course feeling and looking aggressively happy and insolently healthy.

The success of a holiday is, perhaps, largely a matter

of temperament. Some people can be happy anywhere, others nowhere. And after you have philosophized to your heart's content, and read all the advertisements for the guidance of the holiday-maker, you feel that your work is in vain. There is really no sound pocket wisdom for the art of holiday, for every would-be holiday-maker is a separate problem, and in the final resort he must be his own guide, philosopher, and friend. One might suggest, as I have done, that for holiday he should do what he wants to do, but even that is only a piece of half wisdom, for which of us knows precisely what he wants to do! Most of us have devoted so much of our time to doing what others expect us to do that we have lost the faculty of pleasing ourselves. It was Mark Twain, I think, who said, with that hidden wisdom which was always a part of his humour, that there was only one better way of spending a holiday than lying under a tree with a book, namely, to lie under a tree without a book. I think the hint a very good one; but I generally find that most people follow it instinctively. How many times has one promised oneself much holiday reading, and how many times has that promise been unfulfilled? I have often dreamt of a really bookish holiday, a holiday, as it were, in a library, but I know I shall never have the courage to take such a holiday. Few people read books on a holiday, unless it rains, for if you are interested in the life about you books are superfluous, and if you are bored you cannot abide them.

Perhaps modern life is becoming too rapid for overmuch dalliance with books, and it becomes increasingly more difficult for bookish persons to catch up with the lost reading of yesterday. Still, it is good to have dreams, and the dream of a holiday in a library is a very pleasant

one. We realize something of it, I fancy, when we drop into our kit-bags a few friendly books, books that have stood the test of time and the sterner tests of familiarity —the *Religio Medici*, *The Golden Treasury*, the *Essays of Elia*, the *Greek Anthology*, the *Compleat Angler*— holiday books all, because they promote reflection in a gentle and intimate way. And even if we never look at the insides of them, it is as consoling to know they are there as it is to know that you have propitiated Æsculapius by providing yourself with simple prophylactics against indigestion and chill.

There is a certain piety in this time-worn promise of a bit of reading next holiday, and one does actually select one's portable library with becoming reverence, even if that part of the outfit sees the least service during the vacation. At the same time I do not underestimate the value of the good resolution which lies behind this empty and innocent little piety; on the contrary, empty pieties and good resolutions are part of the natural equipment of every proper man. They were never meant to be performed or fulfilled, but in the scheme of things they serve their purpose. It is good to walk on a sea beach during the month of August if only to observe the triumphant defeat of good resolutions under the shade of the cliffs or the awnings of the camp chairs. There you will see dozens of fathers and mothers of families with printed matter before them, sometimes actually resting on their faces, and all bathed in what the poet Young has called "calm Nature's sweet restorer—gentle sleep." When I see these happy people thus employed I know their holiday is doing them good, and I know that literature, neglected, though not despised, has aided and abetted the kindly gods of health.

Thus does experience support my suggestion that holiday is artless rather than artful, using both words literally as all honest writers should. But as I write I feel the prospective opposition of possible readers whose faith is firmly based in some cunningly arranged plan of campaign. Now I like to believe that I am neither cynical nor pessimistic, yet I can see quite plainly, as in a kind of mental cinematograph, the coast-wise towns of the British Islands in gala dress and thronged with strangers upon whom the natives smile a smile of welcome not entirely free of self-interest. The strangers, or rather "visitors," to give them their proper title, are the familiar British folk of the inland towns and cities on vacation; they are clad less severely than when they are at home: men assume light flannels, bright lounge coats and crushed or flapping hats, and there seems to be a conspiracy against the waistcoat; women are dressed less carefully and more comfortably than you might think possible. But mere apparel does not give you a full insight into the character of this holiday crowd; to get that you must observe its habits. From such an observation you will learn that all these people are practising a kind of traditional optimism: they are enjoying themselves according to certain settled principles—laboriously doing nothing, or frantically doing something—though which is which it is not easy to discover: lounging on the sands; swimming, or just bobbing about in the water; riding on donkeys or in char-a-bancs; getting backache in a rowing boat, or seasick in a yawl; promenading along the front or discussing nautical matters with expectorating and portly longshoremen (who have "never been upon the sea") on the jetty; listening to minstrels or pierrots and perhaps joining in the choruses (and, if you are of the fair sex,

falling a little in love with the baritone or tenor, according to taste); being jolted on switch-back railways, or by the German band on the front—or on (or is it off?) the joy-wheel. Such are the aids to optimism in my vision of the seaside at holiday time, and I must confess to a certain amusement at it all. To the unsympathetic looker-on this annual business of joy-hunting seems preposterous; he finds some little difficulty in convincing himself that the holiday folk at the seaside during August are having a good time.

Not many things are certain in our haphazard world, but there is at least one thing about which there is little doubt, that is that those who seek happiness miss it, and those who discuss it, lack it. Therefore, I am always inclined to be suspicious of the ways of pleasure-seekers and happiness-mongers. Not that I would have people other than happy—if that is their desire. My suspicion is born of the conviction that both pleasure-seeking and happiness-mongering are futile attempts to discover and supply the undiscoverable. Happiness, like art, happens; it has neither formulæ, nor rules, nor systems; it droppeth as the gentle rain from Heaven upon just and unjust alike, and no man can say he has it because of his virtues, for verily, he may be flouted to his face by the sinner over the way who is happier than he. It has, furthermore, been rumoured that man was made to mourn, and although Rumour was ever a jade, there is much evidence that she has truth on her side for once. But if it be true, as seemingly it is, knowledge of the fact would only intimidate the coward; the brave man is he who is happy in spite of fate. At the same time it must be conceded that there is a subtle joy even in sorrow; melancholy is not necessarily the opposite of happiness, it may be a part

of it. One may even enjoy it, without taking one's pleasure sadly, as we say. Indeed, if there is any truth in Keats's thought that "in the very temple of Delight veiled Melancholy hath her sovran shrine," the converse also may be true.

Sad folk must certainly gloat upon some secret treasure of joy, which is a sealed document to the merely happy, or they would not be so contented. I believe Mrs. Gummidge knew a deeper joy in life—lone, lorn, and sad though she was—than ever Mark Tapley imagined in his most preposterously and irritatingly happy moments. But of the two, I prefer Mrs. Gummidge; she at least was under no illusions about making other people happy or even of attempting the pursuit of happiness for herself. She was content to feel lonesome, and in the attainment of that state attaining also to bliss as a sort of by-product. As to that undeserving immortal Mark Tapley—I think we may look upon him as an amiable fraud, an illusion of the big heart of Charles Dickens. Your pertinacious optimist is a very sorry dog, and I am inclined to shun him as one shuns those sick souls who are forever cracking jokes ("comic fellows, funny men, and clowns in private life," as Sir W. S. Gilbert put it). But I do not deny the value of optimism nor the necessity of pleasure. Optimism is one of the most powerful of human weapons against fate; it is almost as invincible as indifference. And, incidentally, it is the fundamental principle of society, for unless we believed that the majority of people, perhaps all people, were somehow and somewhere good and capable of joy, the thing we call society could not last for a week. Optimism is faith—faith in oneself, faith in one's fellows and faith in the world: and faith is the motive force of life.

But you can never say that you have happiness any more than you can say you are going to have it; you either have it or have it not. It is only when it has fled that you discuss it. It is just as absurd for a man to say he is going to be happy as it is for a man to say he is going to be himself. Both promises are abstractions, nothing more, and to strive to become an abstraction is to court destruction.

So it is that I am just a little doubtful about the motley array of paraphernalia at the annual seaside wedding of work and play. It is obvious that some people get some fun out of these things. But the test of the sort of fun obtainable at a popular pleasure resort, one that really goes into the business on a grand scale, say Blackpool or Coney Island, may be realized in the development of the pleasure machine. Simple games and healthy exercises have long since ceased to satisfy the holiday crowd, with the result that the pursuit of pleasure has become a pursuit of novel sensation. Enterprising merchants of delight have risen to the occasion first by inventing swings and roundabouts, then artificial toboggan slides and switchback railways; from these the progress to water-chutes, big wheels, and high towers has been easy. But the demand for exhilaration is by no means appeased, so fresh ingenuity has to be put forth in the interest of pleasure-seekers whose one desire seems to be giddiness and delirium. Avernus wheels are brought into being, and the pleasure-mongers, setting their monstrous brains to work, conceive wiggle-woggles and flip-flaps and topsy-turvies, and, save the mark, joy-wheels! This last might well be the climax and symbol of pleasure follies. You sit on a slightly convex revolving platform, flush with the floor, and you hold on to its

smooth surface, like a beetle or a gecko, until the increasing rapidity of the revolutions hurls you off; "you" is, of course, plural, for the joy-wheel is a social machine, and you traffic with it in groups, scrimmaging somewhat to get the centre place, which by the laws of physics is most secure. You are thrown off singly and in knots, shrieking and laughing hysterically and fearfully, as many times as you like for threepence or sixpence, according to whether it is at Margate or Earl's Court. To such a pass as this has the search for the elixir of pleasure brought us.

Therefore—but is there a therefore? Is it not in point of fact an absurd pass for any species to have got itself into—and outside sane argument? Let us agree, then, reader, you and I, that when all is said and done, the best of all holidays is the holiday that comes upon you unawares. The time of the year matters little, the place not at all; persons may have something to do with it, but it is just as likely they may have nothing to do with it. You do not know precisely how it comes about, and you do not care; perhaps even you may not know it has come about at all until you look backwards after it is over, and you know it cannot be repeated: holidays don't repeat themselves. It may be that you have gone somewhere on business, missed the train back, and found yourself wandering idly amid green fields or in a sleepy village with inviting inns and a grey old church. It may be that you have suddenly, for no obvious reason, thrown down your tools and fled, for some still less obvious reason, to a near or remote place. You may have spent half the time in a railway train, or you may have gone no farther afield than your own favourite subterranean café. But the experience has been dis-

tinguishable from your average daily experience; it has had about it a quiet cheerfulness, a holy calm, and if you feel that it has been worth the trouble, you have achieved holiday. Perhaps, then, there is no art of holiday—holidays just occur. Shall we agree on that, we two?

—*Holbrook Jackson*

From "Southward Ho! and Other Essays"
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"Yes," said the dealer, "our windfalls are of various kinds. Some customers are ignorant, and then I touch a dividend on my superior knowledge. Some are dishonest," and here he held up the candle, so that the light fell strongly on his visitor, "and in that case," he continued, "I profit by my virtue."

Markheim had but just entered from the daylight streets, and his eyes had not yet grown familiar with the mingled shine and darkness in the shop. At these pointed words, and before the near presence of the flame, he blinked painfully and looked aside.

The dealer chuckled. "You come to me on Christmas Day," he resumed, "when you know that I am alone in my house, put up my shutters, and make a point of refusing business. Well, you will have to pay for that; you will have to pay for my loss of time, when I should be balancing my books; you will have to pay, besides, for a kind of manner that I remark in you to-day very strongly. I am the essence of discretion, and ask no awkward questions; but when a customer cannot look me in the eye, he has to pay for it." The dealer once more chuckled; and then, changing to his usual business voice, though still with a note of irony, "You can give, as usual, a clear account of how you came into the possession of the object?" he continued. "Still your uncle's cabinet? A remarkable collector, sir!"

And the little pale, round-shouldered dealer stood almost on tiptoe, looking over the top of his gold spec-

tacles, and nodding his head with every mark of disbelief. Markheim returned his gaze with one of infinite pity, and a touch of horror.

"This time," said he, "you are in error. I have not come to sell, but to buy. I have no curios to dispose of; my uncle's cabinet is bare to the wainscot; even were it still intact, I have done well on the Stock Exchange, and should more likely add to it than otherwise, and my errand to-day is simplicity itself. I seek a Christmas present for a lady," he continued, waxing more fluent as he struck into the speech he had prepared; "and certainly I owe you every excuse for thus disturbing you upon so small a matter. But the thing was neglected yesterday; I must produce my little compliment at dinner; and, as you very well know, a rich marriage is not a thing to be neglected."

There followed a pause, during which the dealer seemed to weigh this statement incredulously. The ticking of many clocks among the curious lumber of the shop, and the faint rushing of the cabs in a near thoroughfare, filled up the interval of silence.

"Well, sir," said the dealer, "be it so. You are an old customer after all; and if, as you say, you have the chance of a good marriage, far be it from me to be an obstacle. Here is a nice thing for a lady now," he went on, "this hand glass—fifteenth century, warranted; comes from a good collection, too; but I reserve the name, in the interests of my customer, who was just like yourself, my dear sir, the nephew and sole heir of a remarkable collector."

The dealer, while he thus ran on in his dry and biting voice, had stooped to take the object from its place; and, as he had done so, a shock had passed through Markheim, a start both of hand and foot, a sudden

leap of many tumultuous passions to the face. It passed as swiftly as it came, and left no trace beyond a certain trembling of the hand that now received the glass.

"A glass," he said hoarsely, and then paused, and repeated it more clearly. "A glass? For Christmas? Surely not?"

"And why not?" cried the dealer. "Why not a glass?"

Markheim was looking upon him with an indefinable expression. "You ask me why not?" he said. "Why, look here—look in it—look at yourself! Do you like to see it? No! nor I—nor any man."

The little man had jumped back when Markheim had so suddenly confronted him with the mirror; but now, perceiving there was nothing worse on hand, he chuckled. "Your future lady, sir, must be pretty hard favoured," said he.

"I ask you," said Markheim, "for a Christmas present, and you give me this—this damned reminder of years, and sins, and follies—this hand-conscience! Did you mean it? Had you a thought in your mind? Tell me. It will be better for you if you do. Come, tell me about yourself. I hazard a guess now, that you are in secret a very charitable man?"

The dealer looked closely at his companion. It was very odd, Markheim did not appear to be laughing; there was something in his face like an eager sparkle of hope, but nothing of mirth.

"What are you driving at?" the dealer asked.

"Not charitable?" returned the other gloomily. "Not charitable; not pious; not scrupulous; unloving, unbeloved; a hand to get money, a safe to keep it. Is that all? Dear God, man, is that all?"

"I will tell you what it is," began the dealer, with

some sharpness, and then broke off again into a chuckle. "But I see this is a love match of yours, and you have been drinking the lady's health."

"Ah!" cried Markheim, with a strange curiosity. "Ah, have you been in love? Tell me about that."

"I," cried the dealer. "I in love! I never had the time, nor have I the time to-day for all this nonsense. Will you take the glass?"

"Where is the hurry?" returned Markheim. "It is very pleasant to stand here talking; and life is so short and insecure that I would not hurry away from any pleasure—no, not even from so mild a one as this. We should rather cling, cling to what little we can get, like a man at a cliff's edge. Every second is a cliff, if you think upon it—a cliff a mile high—high enough, if we fall, to dash us out of every feature of humanity. Hence it is best to talk pleasantly. Let us talk of each other: why should we wear this mask? Let us be confidential. Who knows, we might become friends?"

"I have just one word to say to you," said the dealer. "Either make your purchase, or walk out of my shop!"

"True, true," said Markheim. "Enough fooling. To business. Show me something else."

The dealer stooped once more, this time to replace the glass upon the shelf, his thin, blond hair falling over his eyes as he did so. Markheim moved a little nearer, with one hand in the pocket of his greatcoat; he drew himself up and filled his lungs; at the same time many different emotions were depicted together on his face—terror, horror, and resolve, fascination and a physical repulsion; and through a haggard lift of his upper lip, his teeth looked out.

"This, perhaps, may suit," observed the dealer: and then, as he began to re-arise, Markheim bounded from

behind upon his victim. The long, skewerlike dagger flashed and fell. The dealer struggled like a hen, striking his temple on the shelf, and then tumbled on the floor in a heap.

Time had some score of small voices in that shop, some stately and slow as was becoming to their great age; others garrulous and hurried. All these told out the seconds in an intricate chorus of tickings. Then the passage of a lad's feet, heavily running on the pavement, broke in upon these smaller voices and startled Markheim into the consciousness of his surroundings. He looked about him awfully. The candle stood on the counter, its flame solemnly wagging in a draught; and by that inconsiderable movement, the whole room was filled with noiseless bustle and kept heaving like a sea: the tall shadows nodding, the gross blots of darkness swelling and dwindling as with respiration, the faces of the portraits and the china gods changing and wavering like images in water. The inner door stood ajar, and peered into that leaguer of shadows with a long slit of daylight like a pointing finger.

From these fear-stricken rovings, Markheim's eyes returned to the body of his victim, where it lay both humped and sprawling, incredibly small and strangely meaner than in life. In these poor, miserly clothes, in that ungainly attitude, the dealer lay like so much sawdust. Markheim had feared to see it, and, lo! it was nothing. And yet, as he gazed, this bundle of old clothes and pool of blood began to find eloquent voices. There it must lie; there was none to work the cunning hinges or direct the miracle of locomotion—there it must lie till it was found. Found! aye, and then? Then would this dead flesh lift up a cry that would ring over England, and fill the world with the

echoes of pursuit. Aye, dead or not, this was still the enemy. "Time was that when the brains were out," he thought; and the first word struck into his mind. Time, now that the deed was accomplished—time, which had closed for the victim, had become instant and momentous for the slayer.

The thought was yet in his mind, when, first one and then another, with every variety of pace and voice —one deep as the bell from a cathedral turret, another ringing on its treble notes the prelude of a waltz— the clocks began to strike the hour of three in the afternoon.

The sudden outbreak of so many tongues in that dumb chamber staggered him. He began to bestir himself, going to and fro with the candle, beleaguered by moving shadows, and startled to the soul by chance reflections. In many rich mirrors, some of home design, some from Venice or Amsterdam, he saw his face repeated and repeated, as it were an army of spies; his own eyes met and detected him; and the sound of his own steps, lightly as they fell, vexed the surrounding quiet. And still, as he continued to fill his pockets, his mind accused him with a sickening iteration, of the thousand faults of his design. He should have chosen a more quiet hour; he should have prepared an alibi; he should not have used a knife; he should have been more cautious, and only bound and gagged the dealer, and not killed him; he should have been more bold, and killed the servant also; he should have done all things otherwise: poignant regrets, weary, incessant toiling of the mind to change what was unchangeable, to plan what was now useless, to be the architect of the irrevocable past. Meanwhile, and behind all this activity, brute terrors, like the scurrying of rats in a deserted attic, filled the more

remote chambers of his brain with riot; the hand of the constable would fall heavy on his shoulder, and his nerves would jerk like a hooked fish; or he beheld, in galloping defile, the dock, the prison, the gallows, and the black coffin.

Terror of the people in the street sat down before his mind like a besieging army. It was impossible, he thought, but that some rumour of the struggle must have reached their ears and set on edge their curiosity; and now, in all the neighbouring houses, he divined them sitting motionless and with uplifted ear—solitary people, condemned to spend Christmas dwelling alone on memories of the past, and now startlingly recalled from that tender exercise; happy family parties, struck into silence round the table, the mother still with raised finger: every degree and age and humour, but all, by their own hearths, prying and hearkening and weaving the rope that was to hang him. Sometimes it seemed to him he could not move too softly; the clink of the tall Bohemian goblets rang out loudly like a bell; and alarmed by the bigness of the ticking, he was tempted to stop the clocks. And then, again, with a swift transition of his terrors, the very silence of the place appeared a source of peril, and a thing to strike and freeze the passer-by; and he would step more boldly, and bustle aloud among the contents of the shop, and imitate, with elaborate bravado, the movements of a busy man at ease in his own house.

But he was now so pulled about by different alarms that, while one portion of his mind was still alert and cunning, another trembled on the brink of lunacy. One hallucination in particular took a strong hold on his credulity. The neighbour hearkening with white face beside his window, the passer-by arrested by a horrible surmise on the pavement—these could at

worst suspect, they could not know; through the brick walls and shuttered windows only sounds could penetrate. But here, within the house, was he alone? He knew he was; he had watched the servant set forth sweethearting, in her poor best, "out for the day" written in every ribbon and smile. Yes, he was alone, of course; and yet, in the bulk of empty house above him, he could surely hear a stir of delicate footing—he was surely conscious, inexplicably conscious of some presence. Aye, surely; to every room and corner of the house his imagination followed it; and now it was a faceless thing, and yet had eyes to see with; and again it was a shadow of himself; and yet again behold the image of the dead dealer, reinspired with cunning and hatred.

At times, with a strong effort, he would glance at the open door which still seemed to repel his eyes. The house was tall, the skylight small and dirty, the day blind with fog; and the light that filtered down to the ground story was exceedingly faint, and showed dimly on the threshold of the shop. And yet, in that strip of doubtful brightness, did there not hang wavering a shadow?

Suddenly, from the street outside, a very jovial gentleman began to beat with a staff on the shop-door, accompanying his blows with shouts and railleries in which the dealer was continually called upon by name. Markheim, smitten into ice, glanced at the dead man. But no! he lay quite still; he was fled away far beyond earshot of these blows and shoutings; he was sunk beneath seas of silence; and his name, which would once have caught his notice above the howling of a storm, had become an empty sound. And presently the jovial gentleman desisted from his knocking and departed.

Here was a broad hint to hurry what remained to be done, to get forth from this accusing neighbourhood, to plunge into a bath of London multitudes, and to reach, on the other side of day, that haven of safety and apparent innocence—his bed. One visitor had come: at any moment another might follow and be more obstinate. To have done the deed, and yet not to reap the profit, would be too abhorrent a failure. The money, that was now Markheim's concern; and as a means to that, the keys.

He glanced over his shoulder at the open door, where the shadow was still lingering and shivering; and with no conscious repugnance of the mind, yet with a tremor of the belly, he drew near the body of his victim. The human character had quite departed. Like a suit half-stuffed with bran, the limbs lay scattered, the trunk doubled, on the floor; and yet the thing repelled him. Although so dingy and inconsiderable to the eye, he feared it might have more significance to the touch. He took the body by the shoulders, and turned it on its back. It was strangely light and supple, and the limbs, as if they had been broken, fell into the oddest postures. The face was robbed of all expression; but it was as pale as wax, and shockingly smeared with blood about one temple. That was, for Markheim, the one displeasing circumstance. It carried him back, upon the instant, to a certain fair-day in a fishers' village: a grey day, a piping wind, a crowd upon the street, the blare of brasses, the booming of drums, the nasal voice of a ballad singer; and a boy going to and fro, buried over head in the crowd and divided between interest and fear, until, coming out upon the chief place of concourse, he beheld a booth and a great screen with pictures, dismally designed, garishly coloured: Brownrigg

with her apprentice; the Mannings with their murdered guest; Weare in the death-grip of Thurtell; and a score besides of famous crimes. The thing was as clear as an illusion; he was once again that little boy; he was looking once again, and with the same sense of physical revolt, at these vile pictures; he was still stunned by the thumping of the drums. A bar of that day's music returned upon his memory; and at that, for the first time, a qualm came over him, a breath of nausea, a sudden weakness of the joints, which he must instantly resist and conquer.

He judged it more prudent to confront than to flee from these considerations; looking the more hardily in the dead face, bending his mind to realize the nature and greatness of his crime. So little a while ago that face had moved with every change of sentiment, that pale mouth had spoken, that body had been all on fire with governable energies; and now, and by his act, that piece of life had been arrested, as the horologist, with interjected finger, arrests the beating of the clock. So he reasoned in vain; he could rise to no more remorseful consciousness; the same heart which had shuddered before the painted effigies of crime, looked on its reality unmoved. At best, he felt a gleam of pity for one who had been endowed in vain with all those faculties that can make the world a garden of enchantment, one who had never lived and who was now dead. But of penitence, no, not a tremor.

With that, shaking himself clear of these considerations, he found the keys and advanced towards the open door of the shop. Outside, it had begun to rain smartly; and the sound of the shower upon the roof had banished silence. Like some dripping cavern, the chambers of the house were haunted by an incessant echoing, which filled the ear and mingled with the ticking of the clocks. And,

as Markheim approached the door, he seemed to hear, in answer to his own cautious tread, the steps of another foot withdrawing up the stair. The shadow still palpitated loosely on the threshold. He threw a ton's weight of resolve upon his muscles, and drew back the door.

The faint, foggy daylight glimmered dimly on the bare floors and stairs; on the bright suit of armour posted, halbert in hand, upon the landing; and on the dark wood-carvings, and framed pictures that hung against the yellow panels of the wainscot. So loud was the beating of the rain through all the house that, in Markheim's ears, it began to be distinguished into many different sounds. Footsteps and sighs, the tread of regiments marching in the distance, the chink of money in the counting, and the creaking of doors held stealthily ajar, appeared to mingle with the patter of the drops upon the cupola and the gushing of the water in the pipes. The sense that he was not alone grew upon him to the verge of madness. On every side he was haunted and begirt by presences. He heard them moving in the upper chambers; from the shop, he heard the dead man getting to his legs; and, as he began with a great effort to mount the stairs, feet fled quietly before him and followed stealthily behind. If he were but deaf, he thought, how tranquilly he would possess his soul! And then again, and hearkening with ever fresh attention, he blessed himself for that unresting sense which held the outposts and stood a trusty sentinel upon his life. His head turned continually on his neck; his eyes, which seemed starting from their orbits, scouted on every side, and on every side were half-rewarded as with the tail of something nameless vanishing. The four-and-twenty steps to the first floor were four-and-twenty agonies.

On that first story, the doors stood ajar, three of

them like three ambushes, shaking his nerves like the throats of cannon. He could never again, he felt, be sufficiently immured and fortified from men's observing eyes; he longed to be home, girt in by walls, buried among bedclothes, and invisible to all but God. And at that thought he wondered a little, recollecting tales of other murderers and the fear they were said to entertain of heavenly avengers. It was not so, at least, with him. He feared the laws of nature, lest, in their callous and immutable procedure, they should preserve some damning evidence of his crime. He feared tenfold more, with a slavish, superstitious terror, some scission in the continuity of man's experience, some wilful illegality of nature. He played a game of skill, depending on the rules, calculating consequence from cause; and what if nature, as the defeated tyrant overthrew the chess-board, should break the mould of their succession? The like had befallen Napoleon (so writers said) when the winter changed the time of its appearance. The like might befall Markheim: the solid walls might become transparent and reveal his doings like those of bees in a glass hive; the stout planks might yield under his foot like quicksands and detain him in their clutch; aye, and there were soberer accidents that might destroy him: if, for instance, the house should fall and imprison him beside the body of his victim; or the house next door should fly on fire, and the firemen invade him from all sides. These things he feared; and, in a sense, these things might be called the hands of God reached forth against sin. But about God Himself he was at ease; his act was doubtless exceptional, but so were his excuses, which God knew; it was there, and not among men, that he felt sure of justice.

When he had got safe into the drawing-room, and shut

the door behind him, he was aware of a respite from alarms. The room was quite dismantled, uncarpeted besides, and strewn with packing cases and incongruous furniture; several great pier-glasses, in which he beheld himself at various angles, like an actor on a stage; many pictures, framed and unframed, standing, with their faces to the wall; a fine Sheraton sideboard, a cabinet of marquetry, and a great old bed, with tapestry hangings. The windows opened to the floor; but by great good fortune the lower part of the shutters had been closed, and this concealed him from the neighbours. Here, then, Markheim drew in a packing case before the cabinet, and began to search among the keys. It was a long business, for there were many; and it was irksome, besides; for, after all, there might be nothing in the cabinet, and time was on the wing. But the closeness of the occupation sobered him. With the tail of his eye he saw the door—even glanced at it from time to time directly, like a besieged commander pleased to verify the good estate of his defences. But in truth he was at peace. The rain falling in the street sounded natural and pleasant. Presently, on the other side, the notes of a piano were wakened to the music of a hymn, and the voices of many children took up the air and words. How stately, how comfortable was the melody! How fresh the youthful voices! Markheim gave ear to it smilingly, as he sorted out the keys; and his mind was thronged with answerable ideas and images; church-going children and the pealing of the high organ; children afield, bathers by the brook-side, ramblers on the brambly common, kite-flyers in the windy and cloud-navigated sky; and then, at another cadence of the hymn, back again to church, and the somnolence of summer Sundays, and the high genteel voice of the parson (which he smiled a little to recall)

and the painted Jacobean tombs, and the dim lettering of the Ten Commandments in the chancel.

And as he sat thus, at once busy and absent, he was startled to his feet. A flash of ice, a flash of fire, a bursting gush of blood, went over him, and then he stood transfixed and thrilling. A step mounted the stair slowly and steadily, and presently a hand was laid upon the knob, and the lock clicked, and the door opened.

Fear held Markheim in a vise. What to expect he knew not, whether the dead man walking, or the official ministers of human justice, or some chance witness blindly stumbling in to consign him to the gallows. But when a face was thrust into the aperture, glanced round the room, looked at him, nodded and smiled as if in friendly recognition, and then withdrew again, and the door closed behind it, his fear broke loose from his control in a hoarse cry. At the sound of this the visitant returned.

"Did you call me?" he asked pleasantly, and with that he entered the room and closed the door behind him.

Markheim stood and gazed at him with all his eyes. Perhaps there was a film upon his sight, but the outlines of the new-comer seemed to change and waver like those of the idols in the wavering candlelight of the shop; and at times he thought he knew him; and at times he thought he bore a likeness to himself; and always, like a lump of living terror, there lay in his bosom the conviction that this thing was not of the earth and not of God.

And yet the creature had a strange air of the commonplace, as he stood looking on Markheim with a smile; and when he added: "You are looking for the money, I believe?" it was in the tones of everyday politeness.

Markheim made no answer.

"I should warn you," resumed the other, "that the

maid has left her sweetheart earlier than usual and will soon be here. If Mr. Markheim be found in this house, I need not describe to him the consequences."

"You know me?" cried the murderer.

The visitor smiled. "You have long been a favourite of mine," he said; "and I have long observed and often sought to help you."

"What are you?" cried Markheim; "the devil?"

"What I may be," returned the other, "cannot affect the service I propose to render you."

"It can," cried Markheim; "it does! Be helped by you? No, never; not by you! You do not know me yet; thank God, you do not know me!"

"I know you," replied the visitant, with a sort of kind severity or rather firmness. "I know you to the soul."

"Know me!" cried Markheim. "Who can do so? My life is but a travesty and slander on myself. I have lived to belie my nature. All men do; all men are better than this disguise that grows about and stifles them. You see each dragged away by life, like one whom bravos have seized and muffled in a cloak. If they had their own control—if you could see their faces, they would be altogether different, they would shine out for heroes and saints! I am worse than most; myself is more overlaid; my excuse is known to me and God. But, had I the time, I could disclose myself."

"To me?" inquired the visitant.

"To you before all," returned the murderer. "I supposed you were intelligent. I thought—since you exist—you would prove a reader of the heart. And yet you would propose to judge me by my acts! Think of it; my acts! I was born and I have lived in a land of giants; giants have dragged me by the wrists since I was born out of my mother—the giants of circumstance.

And you would judge me by my acts! But can you not look within? Can you not understand that evil is hateful to me? Can you not see within me the clear writing of conscience, never blurred by any wilful sophistry, although too often disregarded? Can you not read me for a thing that surely must be common as humanity —the unwilling sinner?"

"All this is very feelingly expressed," was the reply, "but it regards me not. These points of consistency are beyond my province, and I care not in the least by what compulsion you may have been dragged away, so as you are but carried in the right direction. But time flies; the servant delays, looking in the faces of the crowd and at the pictures on the hoardings, but still she keeps moving nearer; and remember, it is as if the gallows itself was striding towards you through the Christmas streets! Shall I help you; I, who know all? Shall I tell you where to find the money?"

"For what price?" asked Markheim.

"I offer you the service for a Christmas gift," returned the other.

Markheim could not refrain from smiling with a kind of bitter triumph. "No," said he, "I will take nothing at your hands; if I were dying of thirst, and it was your hand that put the pitcher to my lips, I should find the courage to refuse. It may be credulous, but I will do nothing to commit myself to evil."

"I have no objection to a deathbed repentance," observed the visitant.

"Because you disbelieve their efficacy!" Markheim cried.

"I do not say so," returned the other; "but I look on these things from a different side, and when the life is done my interest falls. The man has lived to

serve me, to spread black looks under colour of religion, or to sow tares in the wheat-field, as you do, in a course of weak compliance with desire. Now that he draws so near to his deliverance, he can add but one act of service —to repent, to die smiling, and thus to build up in confidence and hope the more timorous of my surviving followers. I am not so hard a master. Try me. Accept my help. Please yourself in life as you have done hitherto; please yourself more amply, spread your elbows at the board; and when the night begins to fall and the curtains to be drawn, I tell you, for your greater comfort, that you will find it even easy to compound your quarrel with your conscience, and to make a truckling peace with God. I came but now from such a deathbed, and the room was full of sincere mourners, listening to the man's last words: and when I looked into that face, which had been set as a flint against mercy, I found it smiling with hope."

"And do you, then, suppose me such a creature?" asked Markheim. "Do you think I have no more generous aspirations than to sin, and sin, and sin, and, at the last, sneak into heaven? My heart rises at the thought. Is this, then, your experience of mankind? or is it because you find me with red hands that you presume such baseness? and is this crime of murder indeed so impious as to dry up the very springs of good?"

"Murder is to me no special category," replied the other. "All sins are murder, even as all life is war. I behold your race, like starving mariners on a raft, plucking crusts out of the hands of famine and feeding on each other's lives. I follow sins beyond the moment of their acting; I find in all that the last consequence is death; and to my eyes, the pretty maid who thwarts her mother with such taking graces on a question of

a ball, drips no less visibly with human gore than such a murderer as yourself. Do I say that I follow sins? I follow virtues also; they differ not by the thickness of a nail, they are both scythes for the reaping angel of Death. Evil, for which I live, consists not in action but in character. The bad man is dear to me; not the bad act, whose fruits, if we could follow them far enough down the hurtling cataract of the ages, might yet be found more blessed than those of the rarest virtues. And it is not because you have killed a dealer, but because you are Markheim, that I offer to forward your escape."

"I will lay my heart open to you," answered Markheim. "This crime on which you find me is my last. On my way to it I have learned many lessons; itself is a lesson, a momentous lesson. Hitherto I have been driven with revolt to what I would not; I was a bond-slave to poverty, driven and scourged. There are robust virtues that can stand in these temptations; mine was not so: I had a thirst of pleasure. But to-day, and out of this deed, I pluck both warning and riches —both the power and a fresh resolve to be myself. I become in all things a free actor in the world; I begin to see myself all changed, these hands the agents of good, this heart at peace. Something comes over me out of the past; something of what I have dreamed on Sabbath evenings to the sound of the church organ, of what I forecast when I shed tears over noble books, or talked, an innocent child, with my mother. There lies my life; I have wandered a few years, but now I see once more my city of destination."

"You are to use this money on the Stock Exchange, I think?" remarked the visitor; "and there, if I mistake not, you have already lost some thousands?"

"Ah," said Markheim, "but this time I have a sure thing."

"This time, again, you will lose," replied the visitor quietly.

"Ah, but I keep back the half!" cried Markheim.

"That also you will lose," said the other.

The sweat started upon Markheim's brow. "Well, then, what matter?" he exclaimed. "Say it be lost, say I am plunged again in poverty, shall one part of me, and that the worse, continue until the end to override the better? Evil and good run strong in me, haling me both ways. I do not love the one thing, I love all. I can conceive great deeds, renunciations, martyrdoms; and though I be fallen to such a crime as murder, pity is no stranger to my thoughts. I pity the poor; who knows their trials better than myself? I pity and help them; I prize love, I love honest laughter; there is no good thing nor true thing on earth but I love it from my heart. And are my vices only to direct my life, and my virtues to lie without effect, like some passive lumber of the mind? Not so; good, also, is a spring of acts."

But the visitant raised his finger. "For six-and-thirty years that you have been in this world," said he, "through many changes of fortune and varieties of humour, I have watched you steadily fall. Fifteen years ago you would have started at a theft. Three years back you would have blenched at the name of murder. Is there any crime, is there any cruelty or meanness, from which you still recoil?—five years from now I shall detect you in the fact! Downward, downward, lies your way; nor can anything but death avail to stop you."

"It is true," Markheim said huskily, "I have in some degree complied with evil. But it is so with all; the very

saints, in the mere exercise of living, grow less dainty, and take on the tone of their surroundings."

"I will propound to you one simple question," said the other; "and as you answer, I shall read to you your moral horoscope. You have grown in many things more lax; possibly you do right to be so; and at any account, it is the same with all men. But granting that, are you in any one particular, however trifling, more difficult to please with your own conduct, or do you go in all things with a looser rein?"

"In any one?" repeated Markheim, with an anguish of consideration. "No," he added, with despair, "in none! I have gone down in all."

"Then," said the visitor, "content yourself with what you are, for you will never change; and the words of your part on this stage are irrevocably written down."

Markheim stood for a long while silent, and indeed it was the visitor who first broke the silence, "That being so," he said, "shall I show you the money?"

"And grace?" cried Markheim.

"Have you not tried it?" returned the other. "Two or three years ago, did I not see you on the platform of revival meetings, and was not your voice the loudest in the hymn?"

"It is true," said Markheim; "and I see clearly what remains for me by way of duty. I thank you for these lessons from my soul; my eyes are opened, and I behold myself at last for what I am."

At this moment, the sharp note of the door-bell rang through the house; and the visitant, as though this were some concerted signal for which he had been waiting, changed at once in his demeanour.

"The maid!" he cried. "She has returned, as I forewarned you, and there is now before you one more difficult

passage. Her master, you must say, is ill; you must let her in, with an assured but rather serious countenance—no smiles, no overacting, and I promise you success! Once the girl within, and the door closed, the same dexterity that has already rid you of the dealer will relieve you of this last danger in your path. Thenceforward you have the whole evening—the whole night, if needful—to ransack the treasures of the house and to make good your safety. This is help that comes to you with the mask of danger. Up!" he cried; "up, friend; your life hangs trembling in the scales: up, and act!"

Markheim steadily regarded his counsellor. "If I be condemned to evil acts," he said, "there is still one door of freedom open—I can cease from action. If my life be an ill thing, I can lay it down. Though I be, as you say truly, at the beck of every small temptation, I can yet, by one decisive gesture, place myself beyond the reach of all. My love of good is damned to barrenness; it may, and let it be! But I have still my hatred of evil; and from that, to your galling disappointment, you shall see that I can draw both energy and courage."

The features of the visitor began to undergo a wonderful and lovely change: they brightened and softened with a tender triumph, and, even as they brightened, faded and dislimned. But Markheim did not pause to watch or understand the transformation. He opened the door and went downstairs very slowly, thinking to himself. His past went soberly before him; he beheld it as it was, ugly and strenuous like a dream, random as chance-medley—a scene of defeat. Life, as he thus reviewed it, tempted him no longer; but on the farther side he perceived a quiet haven for his bark. He paused in the passage, and looked into the shop, where the candle still burned by the dead body. It was strangely silent.

Thoughts of the dealer swarmed into his mind, as he stood gazing. And then the bell once more broke out into impatient clamour.

He confronted the maid upon the threshold with something like a smile.

"You had better go for the police," said he: "I have killed your master."

—*R. L. Stevenson*

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PART III

THE BLACKWATER POT

The lesson of fear was one which Henderson learned late. He learned it well, however, when the time came. And it was Blackwater Pot that taught him.

Sluggishly, reluctantly, impotently, the spruce logs followed one another round and round the circuit of the great stone pot. The circling water within the pot was smooth and deep and black, but streaked with foam. At one side a gash in the rocky rim opened upon the sluicing current of the river, which rushed on, quivering and seething, to plunge with a roar into the terrific cauldron of the falls. Out of that thunderous cauldron, filled with huge tramplings and the shriek of tortured torrents, rose a white curtain of spray, which every now and then swayed upward and drenched the green birches which grew about the rim of the pot. For the break in the rim, which caught at the passing current and sucked it into the slow swirls of Blackwater Pot, was not a dozen feet from the lip of the falls.

Henderson sat at the foot of a ragged white birch which leaned from the upper rim of the pot. He held his pipe unlighted, while he watched the logs with a half-fascinated stare. Outside, in the river, he saw them in a clumsy panic haste, wallowing down the white rapids to their awful plunge. When a log came close along shore its fate hung for a second or two in doubt. It might shoot straight on, over the lip, into the wavering curtain of spray and vanish into the horror of the cauldron. Or, at

the last moment, the eddy might reach out stealthily and drag it into the sullen wheeling procession within the pot. All that it gained here, however, was a terrible kind of respite, a breathing-space of agonized suspense. As it circled around, and came again to the opening by which it had entered, it might continue on another eventless revolution, or it might, according to the whim of the eddy, be cast forth once more, irretrievably, into the clutch of the awful sluice. Sometimes two logs, after a pause in what seemed like a secret death-struggle, would crowd each other out and go over the falls together. And sometimes, on the other hand, all would make the circuit safely again and again. But always, at the cleft in the rim of the pot, there was the moment of suspense, the shuddering, terrible panic.

It was this recurring moment that seemed to fasten itself balefully upon Henderson's imagination, so that he forgot to smoke. He had looked into the Blackwater before, but never when there were any logs in the pot. Moreover, on this particular morning, he was overwrought with weariness. For a little short of three days he had been at the utmost tension of body, brain, and nerve, in hot but wary pursuit of a desperado whom it was his duty, as deputy-sheriff of his county, to capture and bring to justice.

This outlaw, a French half-breed, known through the length and breadth of the wild backwoods county as "Red Pichot," was the last but one—and accounted the most dangerous—of a band which Henderson had undertaken to break up. Henderson had been deputy for two years, and owed his appointment primarily to his pre-eminent fitness for this very task. Unacquainted with fear, he was at the same time unrivalled through the

backwoods counties for his subtle woodcraft, his sleepless endurance, and his cunning.

It was two years now since he had set his hand to the business. One of the gang had been hanged. Two were in the penitentiary, on life sentence. Henderson had justified his appointment to every one except himself. But while Pichot and his gross-witted tool, "Bug" Mitchell, went unhanged, he felt himself on probation, if not shamed. Mitchell he despised. But Pichot, the brains of the gang, he honoured with a personal hatred that held a streak of rivalry. For Pichot, though a beast for cruelty and treachery, and with the murder of a woman on his black record—which placed him, according to Henderson's ideas, in a different category from a mere killer of men—was at the same time a born leader and of a courage none could question. Some chance dash of Scotch Highland blood in his mixed veins had set a mop of hot red hair above his black, implacable eyes and cruel, dark face. It had touched his villainies, too, with an imagination which made them the more atrocious. And Henderson's hate for him as a man was mixed with respect for the adversary worthy of his powers.

Reaching the falls, Henderson had been forced to acknowledge that, once again, Pichot had outwitted him on the trail. Satisfied that his quarry was by this time far out of reach among the tangled ravines on the other side of Two Mountains, he dismissed the two tired river-men who constituted his posse, bidding them go on down the river to Greensville and wait for him. It was his plan to hunt alone for a couple of days in the hope of catching his adversary off guard. He had an ally, unsuspected and invaluable, in a long-legged, half-wild youngster of a girl, who lived alone with her father in a clearing about

a mile below the falls, and regarded Henderson with a childlike hero-worship. This shy little savage, whom all the Settlement knew as "Baisley's Sis," had an intuitive knowledge of the wilderness and the trails which rivalled even Henderson's accomplished woodcraft; and the indomitable deputy "set great store," as he would have put it, by her friendship. He would go down presently to the clearing and ask some questions of the child. But first he wanted to do a bit of thinking. To think the better, the better to collect his tired and scattered wits, he had stood his Winchester carefully upright between two spruce saplings, filled his pipe, lighted it with relish, and seated himself under the old birch where he could look straight down upon the wheeling logs in Blackwater Pot.

It was while he was looking down into the terrible eddy that his efforts to think failed him and his pipe went out, and his interest in the fortunes of the captive logs gradually took the hold of a nightmare upon his overwrought imagination. One after one he would mark, snatched in by the capricious eddy and held back a little while from its doom. One after one he would see crowded out again, by inexplicable whim, and hurled on into the raging horror of the falls. He fell to personifying this captive log or that, endowing it with sentience, and imagining its emotions each time it circled shuddering past the cleft in the rim, once more precariously reprieved.

At last, either because he was more deeply exhausted than he knew, or because he had fairly dropped asleep with his eyes open and his fantastic imaginings had slipped into a veritable dream, he felt himself suddenly become identified with one of the logs. It was one which was just drawing around to the fateful cleft. Would it win past once more? No; it was too far out! It felt the grasp of the outward suction, soft and insidious at first,

then resistless as the falling of a mountain. With straining nerves and pounding heart Henderson strove to hold it back by sheer will and the wrestling of his eyes. But it was no use. Slowly the head of the log turned outward from its circling fellows, quivered for a moment in the cleft, then shot smoothly forth into the sluice. With a groan Henderson came to his senses, starting up and catching instinctively at the butt of the heavy Colt in his belt. At the same instant the coil of a rope settled over his shoulders, pinioning his arms to his sides, and he was jerked backwards with a violence that fairly lifted him over the projecting root of the birch. As he fell his head struck a stump; and he knew nothing more.

When Henderson came to his senses he found himself in a most bewildering position. He was lying face downwards along a log, his mouth pressed upon the rough bark. His arms and legs were in the water, on either side of the log. Other logs moved past him sluggishly. For a moment he thought himself still in the grip of his nightmare, and he struggled to wake himself. The struggle revealed to him that he was bound fast upon the log. At this his wits cleared up, with a pang that was more near despair than anything he had ever known. Then his nerve steadied itself back into its wonted control.

He realized what had befallen him. His enemies had back-trailed him and caught him off his guard. He was just where, in his awful dream, he had imagined himself as being. He was bound to one of the logs down in the great stone pot of Blackwater Eddy.

For a second or two the blood in his veins ran ice, as he braced himself to feel the log lurch out into the sluice and plunge into the trampling of the abyss. Then he observed that the other logs were overtaking and passing him. His log, indeed, was not moving at all. Evidently,

then, it was being held by some one. He tried to look around, but found himself so fettered that he could only lift his face a few inches from the log. This enabled him to see the whole surface of the eddy and the fateful cleft, and out across the raving torrents into the white curtain that swayed above the cauldron. But he could not, with the utmost twisting and stretching of his neck, see more than a couple of feet up the smooth stone sides of the pot.

As he strained on his bonds he heard a harsh chuckle behind him; and the log, suddenly loosed with a jerk which showed him it had been held by a pike-pole, began to move. A moment later the sharp, steel-armed end of the pike-pole came down smartly on the forward end of the log, within a dozen inches of Henderson's head, biting a secure hold. The log again came to a stop. Slowly, under pressure from the other end of the pike-pole, it rolled outward, submerging Henderson's right shoulder, and turning his face till he could see all the way up the sides of the pot.

What he saw, on a ledge about three feet above the water, was Red Pichot, holding the pike-pole and smiling down upon him smoothly. On the rim above squatted Bug Mitchell, scowling, and gripping his knife as if he thirsted to settle up all scores on the instant. Imagination was lacking in Mitchell's make-up; and he was impatient—so far as he dared to be—of Pichot's fantastic procrastinatings.

When Henderson's eyes met the evil, smiling glance of his enemy they were steady and cold as steel. To Henderson, who had always, in every situation, felt himself master, there remained now no mastery but that of his own will, his own spirit. In his estimation there could be no death so dreadful but that to let his spirit cower before his adversary would be tenfold worse.

Helpless though he was, in a position that was ignominiously and grotesquely horrible, and with the imminence of an appalling doom close before his eyes, his nerve never failed him. With cool contempt and defiance he met Red Pichot's smile.

"I've always had an idee," said the half-breed, presently, in a smooth voice that penetrated the mighty vibrations of the falls, "ez how a chap on a log could paddle roun' this yere eddy fer a deuce of a while afore he'd hev to git sucked out into the sluice!"

As a theory this was undoubtedly interesting. But Henderson made no answer.

"I've held that idee," continued Pichot, after a civil pause, "though I hain't never yet found a man, nor a woman nuther, as was willin' to give it a fair trial. But I feel sure ye're the man to oblige me. I've left yer arms kinder free, leastways from the elbows down, an' yer legs also, more or less, so's ye'll be able to paddle easy-like. The walls of the pot's all worn so smooth, below high-water mark, there's nothin' to ketch on to, so there'll be nothin' to take off yer attention. I'm hopin' ye'll give the matter a right fair trial. But ef ye gits tired an' feels like givin' up, why, don't consider my feelin's. There's the falls a-waitin'. An' I ain't a-goin' to bear no grudge ef ye don't quite come up to my expectations of ye."

As Pichot ceased his measured harangue he jerked his pike-pole loose. Instantly the log began to forge forward, joining the reluctant procession. For a few moments Henderson felt like shutting his eyes and his teeth and letting himself go on with all speed to the inevitable doom. Then, with scorn of the weak impulse, he changed his mind. To the last gasp he would maintain his hold on life, and give fortune a chance to save him.

When he could no longer resist, then it would be Fate's responsibility, not his. The better to fight the awful fight that was before him, he put clear out of his mind the picture of Red Pichot and Mitchell perched on the brink above, smoking, and grinning down upon the writhings of their victim. In a moment, as his log drew near the cleft, he had forgotten them. There was room now in all his faculties for but one impulse, one consideration.

The log to which he was bound was on the extreme outer edge of the procession, and Henderson realized that there was every probability of its being at once crowded out the moment it came to the exit. With a desperate effort he succeeded in catching the log nearest to him, pushing it ahead, and at last, just as they came opposite the cleft, steering his own log into its place. The next second it shot quivering forth into the sluice, and Henderson, with a sudden cold sweat jumping out all over him, circled slowly past the awful cleft. A shout of ironical congratulation came to him from the watchers on the brink above. But he hardly heard it, and heeded it not at all. He was striving frantically, paddling forward with one hand and backward with the other, to steer his sluggish, deep-floating log from the outer to the inner circle. He had already observed that to be on the outer edge would mean instant doom for him, because the outward suction was stronger underneath than on the surface, and his weighted log caught its force before the others did. His arms were so bound that only from the elbows down could he move them freely. He did, however, by a struggle which left him gasping, succeed in working in behind another log—just in time to see that log, too, sucked out into the abyss, and himself once more on the deadly outer flank of the circling procession.

This time Henderson did not know whether the watchers on the brink laughed or not as he won past the cleft. He was scheming desperately to devise some less exhausting tactics. Steadily and rhythmically, but with his utmost force, he back-paddled with both hands and feet, till the progress of his log was almost stopped. Then he succeeded in catching yet another log as it passed and manœuvring in behind it. By this time he was halfway around the pot again. Yet again, by his desperate back-paddling, he checked his progress, and presently, by most cunning manipulation, managed to edge in behind yet another log, so that when he again came round to the cleft there were two logs between him and doom. The outermost of these, however, was dragged instantly forth into the fury of the sluice, thrust forward, as it was, by the grip of the suction upon Henderson's own deep log. Feeling himself on the point of utter exhaustion, he nevertheless continued back-paddling, and steering and working inward, till he had succeeded in getting three files of logs between himself and the outer edge. Then, almost blind and with the blood roaring so loud in his ears that he could hardly hear the trampling of the falls, he hung on his log, praying that strength might flow back speedily into his veins and nerves.

Not till he had twice more made the circuit of the pot, and twice more seen a log sucked out from his very elbow to leap into the white horror of the abyss, did Henderson stir. The brief stillness, controlled by his will, had rested him for the moment. He was cool now, keen to plan, cunning to husband his forces. Up to the very last second that he could he would maintain his hold on life, counting always on the chance of the unexpected.

With now just one log remaining between himself and death, he let himself go past the cleft, and saw that

one log go out. Then, being close to the wall of the pot, he tried to delay his progress by clutching at the stone with his left hand and by dragging upon it with his foot. But the stone surface was worn so smooth by the age-long polishing of the eddy that these efforts availed him little. Before he realized it he was almost round again, and only by the most desperate struggle did he succeed in saving himself. There was no other log near by this time for him to seize and thrust forward in his place. It was simply a question of his restricted paddling, with hands and feet, against the outward draught of the current. For nearly a minute the log hung in doubt just before the opening, the current sucking at its head to turn it outward, and Henderson paddling against it not only with hands and feet, but with every ounce of will and nerve that his body contained. At last, inch by inch, he conquered. His log moved past the gate of death; and dimly, again, that ironical voice came down to him, piercing the roar.

Once past, Henderson fell to back-paddling again—not so violently now—till other logs came by within his reach and he could work himself into temporary safety behind them. He was soon forced to the conviction that if he strove at just a shade under his utmost he was able to hold his own and keep one log always between himself and the opening. But what was now his utmost, he realized, would very soon be far beyond his powers. Well, there was nothing to do but to keep on trying. Around and around, and again and again around the terrible, smooth, deliberate circuit he went, sparing himself every ounce of effort that he could, and always shutting his eyes as the log beside him plunged out into the sluice. Gradually, then, he felt himself becoming stupefied by the ceaselessly recurring horror, with the prolonged suspense between. He must sting himself

back to the full possession of his faculties by another burst of fierce effort. Fiercely he caught at log after log, without a let-up, till, luck having favoured him for once, he found himself on the inner instead of the outer edge of the procession. Then an idea flashed into his fast-clouding brain, and he cursed himself for not having thought of it before. At the very centre of the eddy, of course, there must be a sort of core of stillness. By a vehement struggle he attained it and avoided crossing it. Working gently and warily he kept the log right across the axis of the eddy, where huddled a crowd of chips and sticks. Here the log turned slowly, very slowly, on its own centre; and for a few seconds of exquisite relief Henderson let himself sink into a sort of lethargy. He was roused by a sudden shot, and the spat of a heavy bullet into the log about three inches before his head. Even through the shaking thunder of the cataract he thought he recognized the voice of his own heavy Colt; and the idea of that tried weapon being turned against himself filled him with childish rage. Without lifting his head he lay and cursed, grinding his teeth impotently. A few seconds later came another shot, and this time the ball went into the log just before his right arm. Then he understood, and woke up. Pichot was a dead shot. This was his intimation that Henderson must get out into the procession again. At the centre of the eddy he was not sufficiently entertaining to his executioners. The idea of being shot in the head had not greatly disturbed him—he had felt as if it would be rather restful, on the whole. But the thought of getting a bullet in his arm, which would merely disable him and deliver him over helpless to the outdraught, shook him with something near a panic. He fell to paddling with all his remaining strength, and drove his log once more into the horrible

circuit. The commendatory remarks with which Pichot greeted this move went past his ears unheard.

Up to this time there had been a strong sun shining down into the pot, and the trees about its rim had stood unstirred by any wind. Now, however, a sudden darkness settled over everything, and sharp, fitful gusts drew in through the cleft, helping to push the logs back. Henderson was by this time so near fainting from exhaustion that his wits were losing their clearness. Only his horror of the fatal exit, the raving sluice, the swaying white spray-curtain, retained its keenness. As to all else he was growing so confused that he hardly realized the way those great indrawing gusts, laden with spray, were helping him. He was paddling and steering and manœuvring for the inner circuit almost mechanically now. When suddenly the blackness about him was lit with a blue glare, and the thunder crashed over the echoing pot with an explosion that outroared the falls, he hardly noted it. When the skies seemed to open, letting down the rain in torrents, with a wind that almost blew it level, it made no difference to him. He went on paddling dully, indifferent to the bumping of the logs against his shoulders.

But to this fierce storm, which almost bent double the trees around the rim of the pot, Red Pichot and Mitchell were by no means so indifferent. About sixty or seventy yards below the falls they had a snug retreat which was also an outlook. It was a cabin built in a recess of the wall of the gorge, and to be reached only by a narrow pathway easy of defence. When the storm broke in its fury Pichot sprang to his feet.

"Let's git back to the Hole," he cried to his companion, knocking the fire out of his pipe. "We kin watch

just as well from there, an' see the beauty slide over when his time comes."

Pichot led the way off through the straining and hissing trees, and Mitchell followed, growling but obedient. And Henderson, faint upon his log in the raving tumult, knew nothing of their going.

They had not been gone more than two minutes when a drenched little dark face, with black hair plastered over it in wisps, peered out from among the lashing birches and gazed down anxiously into the pot. At the sight of Henderson on his log, lying quite close to the edge, and far back from the dreadful cleft, the terror in the wild eyes gave way to inexpressible relief. The face drew back; and an instant later a bare-legged child appeared, carrying the pike-pole which Pichot had tossed into the bushes. Heedless of the sheeting volleys of the rain and the fierce gusts which whipped her dripping homespun petticoat about her knees, she clambered skilfully down the rock wall to the ledge whereon Pichot had stood. Bracing herself carefully, she reached out with the pike-pole, which, child though she was, she evidently knew how to use.

Henderson was just beginning to recover from his daze, and to notice the madness of the storm, when he felt something strike sharply on the log behind him. He knew it was the impact of a pike-pole, and he wondered, with a kind of scornful disgust, what Pichot could be wanting of him now. He felt the log being dragged backwards, then held close against the smooth wall of the pot. A moment more and his bonds were being cut—but laboriously, as if with a small knife and by weak hands. Then he caught sight of the hands, which were little and brown and rough, and realized, with a great

burst of wonder and tenderness, that old Baisley's "Sis," by some miracle of miracles, had come to his rescue. In a few seconds the ropes fell apart, and he lifted himself, to see the child stooping down with anxious adoration in her eyes.

"Sis!" he cried. "You!"

"Oh, Mr. Henderson, come quick!" she panted. "They may git back any minit." And clutching him by the shoulder, she tried to pull him up by main strength. But Henderson needed no urging. Life, with the return of hope, had surged back into nerve and muscle; and in hardly more time than it takes to tell it, the two had clambered side by side to the rim of the pot and darted into the covert of the tossing trees.

No sooner were they in hiding than Henderson remembered his rifle and slipped back to get it. His enemies had not discovered it. It had fallen into the moss, but the well-oiled, perfect-fitting chamber had kept its cartridges dry. With that weapon in his hands Henderson felt himself once more master of the situation. Weariness and apprehension together slipped from him, and one purpose took complete possession of him. He would settle with Red Pichot right here, on the spot where he had been taught the terrible lesson of fear. He felt that he could not really feel himself a man again unless he could settle the whole score before the sun of that day should set.

The rain and wind were diminishing now; the lightning was a mere shuddering gleam over the hill-tops beyond the river; and the thunder no longer made itself heard above the trampling of the falls. Henderson's plans were soon laid. Then he turned to Sis, who stood silent and motionless close by his side, her big, alert, shy eyes watching like a hunted deer's the trail by which Red

Pichot might return. She was trembling in her heart at every moment that Henderson lingered within that zone of peril. But she would not presume to suggest any move.

Suddenly Henderson turned to her and laid an arm about her little shoulders.

"You saved my life, kid!" he said, softly. "How ever did you know I was down there in that hell?"

"I jest *knowed* it was you, when I seen Red Pichot an' Bug Mitchell a-trackin' some one," answered the child, still keeping her eyes on the trail, as if it was her part to see that Henderson was not again taken unawares. "I *knowed* it was you, Mister Henderson, an' I followed 'em; an' oh, I seen it all, I seen it all, an' I most died because I hadn't no gun. But I'd 'ave killed 'em both, some day, sure, ef—ef they hadn't went away! But they'll be back now right quick."

Henderson bent and kissed her wet black head, saying, "Bless you, kid! You an' me'll always be pals, I reckon!"

At the kiss the child's face flushed, and, for one second forgetting to watch the trail, she lifted glowing eyes to his. But he was already looking away.

"Come on," he muttered. "This ain't no place for you an' me *yet*."

Making a careful circuit through the thick undergrowth, swiftly but silently as two wild-cats, the strange pair gained a covert close beside the trail by which Pichot and Mitchell would return to the rim of the pot. Safely ambuscaded, Henderson laid a hand firmly on the child's arm, resting it there for two or three seconds, as a sign of silence.

Minute after minute went by in the intense stillness. At last the child, whose ears were even keener than

Henderson's, caught her breath with a little indrawing gasp and looked up at her companion's face. Henderson understood; and every muscle stiffened. A moment later and he, too, heard the oncoming tread of hurried footsteps. Then Pichot went by at a swinging stride, with Mitchell skulking obediently at his heels.

Henderson half raised his rifle, and his face turned grey and cold like steel. But it was no part of his plan to shoot even Red Pichot in the back. From the manner of the two ruffians it was plain that they had no suspicion of the turn which affairs had taken. To them it was as sure as two and two make four that Henderson was still on his log in the pot, if he had not already gone over into the cauldron. As they reached the rim Henderson stepped out into the trail behind them, his gun balanced ready like a trapshooter's.

As Pichot, on the very brink, looked down into the pot and saw that his victim was no longer there, he turned to Mitchell with a smile of mingled triumph and disappointment.

But, on the instant, the smile froze on his face. It was as if he had felt the cold, grey gaze of Henderson on the back of his neck. Some warning, certainly, was flashed to that mysterious sixth sense which the people of the wild, man or beast, seem sometimes to be endowed with. He wheeled like lightning, his revolver seeming to leap up from his belt with the same motion. But in the same fraction of a second that his eyes met Henderson's they met the white flame-spurt of Henderson's rifle—and then, the dark.

As Pichot's body collapsed, it toppled over the rim into Blackwater Pot and fell across two moving logs. Mitchell had thrown up his hands straight above his

head when Pichot fell, knowing instantly that that was his only hope of escaping the same fate as his leader's.

One look at Henderson's face, however, satisfied him that he was not going to be dealt with on the spot, and he set his thick jaw stolidly. Then his eyes wandered down into the pot, following the leader whom, in his way, he had loved if ever he had loved any one or anything. Fascinated, his stare followed the two logs as they journeyed around, with Pichot's limp form, face upwards, sprawled across them. They reached the cleft, turned, and shot forth into the raving of the sluice, and a groan of horror burst from "Bug's" lips. By this Henderson knew what had happened, and, to his immeasurable self-scorn, a qualm of remembered fear caught sickeningly at his heart. But nothing of this betrayed itself in his face or voice.

"Come on, Mitchell!" he said, briskly. "I'm in a hurry. You jest step along in front, an' see ye keep both hands well up over yer head, or ye'll be savin' the county the cost o' yer rope. Step out, now."

He stood aside, with Sis at his elbow, to make room. As Mitchell passed, his hands held high, a mad light flamed up into his sullen eyes, and he was on the point of springing, like a wolf, at his captor's throat. But Henderson's look was cool and steady, and his gun held low. The impulse flickered out in the brute's dull veins. But as he glanced at Sis he suddenly understood that it was she who had brought all this to pass. His black face snarled upon her like a wolf's at bay, with an inarticulate curse more horrible than any words could make it. With a shiver the child slipped behind Henderson's back and hid her face.

"Don't be skeered o' him, kid, not one little mite,"

said Henderson, gently. "He ain't a-goin' to trouble this earth no more. An' I'm goin' to get yer father a job, helpin' me, down somewheres near Greensville—because I couldn't sleep nights knowin' ye was runnin' round anywheres near that hell-hole yonder!"

—*Charles G. D. Roberts*

From "The Backwoodsmen"

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The novelists, I think, have seriously libelled the human race. They have made man spend too much of his time in love and too little of it in sport. And if occasionally they show him in the grip of some other ruling passion than love, it is usually political or commercial ambition, miserliness, patriotism, adventurousness, religious idealism, or devotion to his art. Seldom, except in a school story, do we find man the player of games figuring as the hero. No great English novel has been written on Association football. Yet a glance at the newspapers would tell any one but a novelist that in the present generation Association football is engrossing the imaginations of hundreds of thousands of Englishmen.

This, I think, is unfortunate. It would be better if everybody were interested in Rugby. That, however, may be merely the expression of a personal prejudice. It is difficult not to believe that the kind of football that was played at one's own school is the only kind worth playing. Still, no reasonable man who went to Twickenham to see the international match between England and Ireland could be left in much doubt as to which was the perfect football game. The only doubt left in my own mind was whether Rugby is not too dangerous a game—for the spectators. Nietzsche advised us to live dangerously, but I doubt if even he would have approved of our voluntarily undergoing so terrific an experience as attending a good Rugby football match. Human beings were surely not meant to endure such harrowing ordeals.

There was, unfortunately, no gentle gradualness of

introduction to the heat of the game. No sooner had the game begun than it was as if a pot of ice-cold water had in less than a second boiled and bubbled over furiously. As the Irish charged down the field and, broken again and again, fought their way foot by foot in the effort to force themselves with a small egg-shaped ball over the English line, and as the English in their white jerseys gradually thrust them back till they in turn were the charging regiment, it was difficult not to feel that here at last the supreme crisis in history had arrived. At a great game of Association football it is necessary for the spectators to keep up their spirits with a whirling of buzzers when anybody touches the ball. A few people had brought buzzers with them to Twickenham, but how inadequately that *prestissimo* corncrake-music seemed to express the head-over-heels tumble of apprehension and wild hope that races through the bosom at a Rugby match! The truth is, Rugby is so exciting that the spectators dare not give way to their excitement. The only hope is never to shout until you have either to shout or to burst, and to try to keep remembering that what you are watching is only a game and not a life-and-death struggle between nations.

That, I think, was why the young man beside me—and there must have been thousands more who were doing the same thing—was careful to applaud every fine piece of play on either side impartially. I confess I felt more than once the reproof of his sportsmanship. I am utterly incapable of this god-like attitude to Rugby football. I can applaud with anybody at a cricket match or in a theatre; but at Rugby the clapping of hands seems too tepid as a tribute to one's own side and too angelic as a tribute to the other. Enthusiasm expresses itself rather in a series of inarticulate noises, ranging from

ejaculations under the breath (often phrased with Presbyterian piety) to animal cries and nightmare roars. Occasionally the passion of the spectator forms itself into words, as when one of them—an Irishman, I fear—kept inciting his side: "Souse 'em! Souse 'em! Rattle 'em under!" But for the most part, for all the words that were spoken, the spectators might as well have been wolves, lions, seals, foxes, rooks, and singing mice. Not that they were uproarious: on the contrary, they were almost stoical (considering the temptation) in their self-repression; but enthusiasm would keep breaking in—and breaking out, as when the English were attacking the Irish line, and, as the ball passed from flying man to flying man across the field, the whole team seemed to be converted into racing three-quarters. But as each man caught the ball, an Irishman was upon him; and the next man fell under another, and his successor under another, till by the time of the next scrummage there was scarcely a man on either side who had not been engaged in a moment's fierce and octopodous duel. Had I been given to applause, even I could scarcely have withheld a tribute to the enemy on that occasion. England is England, and Ireland is Ireland, and never the twain shall meet, but, etc., etc.

It is odd that human beings should be able to combine the passionate desire for their own side to win with this recurrent sense of admiration of the other side. Some men are able to preserve this glorious doublemindedness even in war—the records of the airmen in the last war show this—but it always seems miraculous rather than natural. The miracle is certainly accomplished in the noble hostilities of Rugby football. The French, it is said, have not yet accustomed themselves to the code, and, being rather new to the game, some of the spectators

find it difficult to realize that a man can be your enemy and your friend at the same time. The marvellous thing is that, for the most part, even the players should be able to preserve the double sense of war and peace through rushes and hand-to-hand fights that, you would imagine, would make even a peaceably-inclined human being see red. There is no cessation of the strain for an hour and a half, save for the half-time interval and those other intervals when a wounded man lies on the ground and his friends gather round him and rub his muscles or pull his limbs back into position. There is fierceness in every line-out as the men throw themselves on the ball and on each other. There is fierceness in every scrummage as each man strains his whole being like blinded Samson, pushing, kicking, wheeling, and, a moment later, flinging himself, like a wave against a breakwater, on men fighting as desperately to break through in one direction as he is fighting to break through in the other.

The struggle between England and Ireland, indeed, was like the struggle between the irresistible force and the immovable mass. Or rather it was like a struggle between two forces, each of which became irresistible in turn and was sweeping on to victory when some genius in the defence turned the tide and another irresistible force drove the game back into the mists at the far end of the field. There can seldom have been teams that were more equal and that at the same time broke through each other or drove each other backwards and forwards so often and so swiftly. So equal were they that it would not have been surprising if neither side had scored. And, possibly, there was luck as well as art in each of the scores on both sides. But for the luck of a penalty-kick, Stephenson could not have kicked that beautiful goal from almost half-way down the field, when the ball

bounced on the cross-bar and toppled over. But for a lucky misjudgment on the part of the Irish full-back such as never had happened to him before, England would not have scored her first try. The next try, scored by Ireland, seemed as ambiguous, since two teams came rushing and tumbling over the line, with every man who could get near it clutching at the ball, and, as Englishmen and Irishmen fell on it in an attempt to embrace it on the grass, you could not have been sure what had happened till the referee pointed with outstretched arm to an Irishman and gave a decision in his favour. As for the last try, it was scored at the other end of the field from me, and I did not see it in the mist, but some of those who did said that it, too, was lucky.

Or, if there was one figure of genius that, as well as luck, turned the scale, it was the English half-back, Young. I see that some of the critics say that he passed badly in the first half; but, in the last twenty minutes of the game, he was a dozen men in himself, cunning as Ulysses, unseizable as Proteus, an eel, a flash of lightning, surpassing Sir Boyle Roche's bird in his gift for being in two places at once. Again and again, the Irish, fierce in their effort to win till the last whistle, fought the English down and seemed incapable of being turned back, when Young, picking up the ball from the heels of his forwards, was off round the scrummage, dodging this man, eluding that one, and, with men tumbling all around him and just before he himself was tumbled among them, passing the ball to a player who, seized and whirled to earth, passed it to another who, wrapped round by an enemy, passed it to another who kicked it into touch and safety. Here were skill and daring as beautiful as victory itself. "It wasn't England that beat you," said an Englishman to an Irishman after the match: "it was the Cantonese."

For, unless I am mistaken, the player who was chosen for the place Young filled as a substitute had been called up to go off with the armed forces to Shanghai.

On these matters I write as an ignoramus—as one who has seen few Rugby matches since his teens, and whose memories of the game mostly go back to his school-days. But even so comparatively indifferent a spectator as I could not but be aware of a strange tumult in the breast as I watched the swift alternations of this desperate game. As for the rest of the forty thousand, some with white hairs, some in the flush of boyhood, it was obvious that here was a consuming passion, as absorbing as the love of money or the love of fame. What man, as he looked on at that interlocked struggle of Titans, cared one way or another about the revision of the Prayer Book, or who was Prime Minister, or remembered that there was such a person as Mussolini or Trotsky? For them there was nothing in the world but football, and the game played itself over in their imaginations all the way home, and after they had gone home, and when they were lying in bed waiting for sleep. And, every now and then till they die, the game will replay itself in their minds, and, when they find a friend who is not bored by such things—and even when they don't—they will talk about it, and remember with a smile Stephenson's goal, and the exquisite trickery of Young, and the touch-judge who was toppled over into the straw in a rush of the players. And some people will think them tedious, and others will envy them. But while memory holds, they themselves will be very, very happy.

—*Robert Lynd* ("*Y. Y.*")

From "The Goldfish"
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ON SAYING "PLEASE"

The young lift-man in a City office who threw a passenger out of his lift the other morning and was fined for the offence was undoubtedly in the wrong. It was a question of "Please." The complainant, entering the lift, said, "Top." The lift-man demanded, "Top—please," and this concession being refused he not only declined to comply with the instruction, but hurled the passenger out of the lift. This, of course, was carrying a comment on manners too far. Discourtesy is not a legal offence, and it does not excuse assault and battery. If a burglar breaks into my house and I knock him down the law will acquit me, and if I am physically assaulted it will permit me to retaliate with reasonable violence. It does this because the burglar and my assailant have broken quite definite commands of the law. But no legal system could attempt to legislate against bad manners, or could sanction the use of violence against something which it does not itself recognize as a legally punishable offence. And whatever our sympathy with the lift-man, we must admit that the law is reasonable. It would never do if we were at liberty to box people's ears because we did not like their behaviour, or the tone of their voices, or the scowl on their faces. Our fists would never be idle, and the gutters of the City would run with blood all day.

I may be as uncivil as I please and the law will protect me against violent retaliation. I may be haughty or boorish and there is no penalty to pay except the penalty of being written down an ill-mannered fellow. The law

does not compel me to say "Please" or to attune my voice to other people's sensibilities any more than it says that I shall not wax my moustache or dye my hair or wear ringlets down my back. It does not recognize the laceration of our feelings as a case for compensation. There is no allowance for moral and intellectual damages in these matters.

This does not mean that the damages are negligible. It is probable that the lift-man was much more acutely hurt by what he regarded as a slur upon his social standing than he would have been if he had had a kick on the shins, for which he could have got legal redress. The pain of a kick on the shins soon passes away, but the pain of a wound to our self-respect or our vanity may poison a whole day. I can imagine that lift-man, denied the relief of throwing the author of his wound out of the lift, brooding over the insult by the hour, and visiting it on his wife in the evening as the only way of restoring his equilibrium. For there are few things more catching than bad temper and bad manners. When Sir Anthony Absolute bullied Captain Absolute, the latter went out and bullied his man Fag, whereupon Fag went downstairs and kicked the page-boy. Probably the man who said "Top" to the lift-man was really only getting back on his employer who had not said "Good morning" to him because he himself had been hen-pecked at breakfast by his wife, to whom the cook had been insolent because the housemaid had "answered her back." We infect the world with our ill-humours. Bad manners probably do more to poison the stream of the general life than all the crimes in the calendar. For one wife who gets a black eye from an otherwise good-natured husband there are a hundred who live a life of martyrdom under the shadow of a morose temper. But all the same the law cannot become the guardian of our

private manners. No Decalogue could cover the vast area of offences and no court could administer a law which governed our social civilities, our speech, the tilt of our eyebrows and all our moods and manners.

But though we are bound to endorse the verdict against the lift-man, most people will have a certain sympathy with him. While it is true that there is no law that compels us to say "Please," there is a social practice much older and more sacred than any law which enjoins us to be civil. And the first requirement of civility is that we should acknowledge a service. "Please" and "Thank you" are the small change with which we pay our way as social beings. They are the little courtesies by which we keep the machine of life oiled and running sweetly. They put our intercourse upon the basis of a friendly co-operation, an easy give-and-take, instead of on the basis of superiors dictating to inferiors. It is a very vulgar mind that would wish to command where he can have the service for asking, and have it with willingness and good-feeling instead of resentment.

I should like to "feature" in this connection my friend the polite conductor. By this discriminating title I do not intend to suggest a rebuke to conductors generally. On the contrary, I am disposed to think that there are few classes of men who come through the ordeal of a very trying calling better than bus conductors do. Here and there you will meet an unpleasant specimen who regards the passengers as his natural enemies—as creatures whose chief purpose on the bus is to cheat him, and who can only be kept reasonably honest by a loud voice and an aggressive manner. But this type is rare—rarer than it used to be. I fancy the public owes much to the Underground Railway Company, which also runs the buses, for insisting on a certain standard of civility in its

servants, and taking care that that standard is observed. In doing this it not only makes things pleasant for the travelling public, but performs an important social service.

It is not, therefore, with any feeling of unfriendliness to conductors as a class that I pay a tribute to a particular member of that class. I first became conscious of his existence one day when I jumped on to a bus and found that I had left home without any money in my pocket. Everyone has had the experience and knows the feeling, the mixed feeling, which the discovery arouses. You are annoyed because you look like a fool at the best, and like a knave at the worst. You would not be at all surprised if the conductor eyed you coldly as much as to say, "Yes, I know that stale old trick. Now then, off you get." And even if the conductor is a good fellow and lets you down easily, you are faced with the necessity of going back, and the inconvenience, perhaps, of missing your train or your engagement.

Having searched my pockets in vain for stray coppers, and having found I was utterly penniless, I told the conductor with as honest a face as I could assume that I couldn't pay the fare, and must go back for money. "Oh, you needn't get off: that's all right," said he. "All right," said I, "but I haven't a copper on me." "Oh, I'll book you through," he replied. "Where d'ye want to go?" and he handled his bundle of tickets with the air of a man who was prepared to give me a ticket for anywhere from the Bank to Hong Kong. I said it was very kind of him, and told him where I wanted to go, and as he gave me the ticket I said, "But where shall I send the fare?" "Oh, you'll see me some day all right," he said cheerfully, as he turned to go. And then, luckily, my fingers, still wandering in the corners of my pockets, lighted on a

shilling, and the account was squared. But that fact did not lessen the glow of pleasure which so good-natured an action had given me.

A few days after my most sensitive toe was trampled on rather heavily as I sat reading on the top of a bus. I looked up with some anger and more agony, and saw my friend of the cheerful countenance. "Sorry, sir," he said. "I know these are heavy boots. Got 'em because my own feet get trod on so much, and now I'm treading on other people's. Hope I didn't hurt you, sir." He had hurt me but he was so nice about it that I assured him he hadn't. After this I began to observe him whenever I boarded his bus, and found a curious pleasure in the constant good-nature of his bearing. He seemed to have an inexhaustible fund of patience and a gift for making his passengers comfortable. I noticed that if it was raining he would run up the stairs to give someone the tip that there was "room inside." With old people he was as considerate as a son, and with children as solicitous as a father. He had evidently a peculiarly warm place in his heart for young people, and always indulged in some merry jest with them. If he had a blind man on board it was not enough to set him down safely on the pavement. He would call to Bill in front to wait while he took him across the road or round the corner, or otherwise safely on his way. In short, I found that he irradiated such an atmosphere of good-temper and kindliness that a journey with him was a lesson in natural courtesy and good manners.

What struck me particularly was the ease with which he got through his work. If bad manners are infectious, so also are good manners. If we encounter incivility most of us are apt to become uncivil, but it is an unusually uncouth person who can be disagreeable with sunny

people. It is with manners as with the weather. "Nothing clears up my spirits like a fine day," said Keats, and a cheerful person descends on even the gloomiest of us with something of the benediction of a fine day. And so it was always fine weather on the polite conductor's bus, and his own civility, his conciliatory address, and good-humoured bearing infected his passengers. In lightening their spirits he lightened his own task. His gaiety was not a wasteful luxury, but a sound investment.

I have missed him from my bus route of late; but I hope that only means that he has carried his sunshine on to another road. It cannot be too widely diffused in a rather drab world. And I make no apologies for writing a panegyric on an unknown bus conductor. If Wordsworth could gather lessons of wisdom from the poor leech-gatherer "on the lonely moor," I see no reason why lesser people should not take lessons in conduct from one who shows how a very modest calling may be dignified by good-temper and kindly feeling.

It is a matter of general agreement that the war has had a chilling effect upon those little every-day civilities of behaviour that sweeten the general air. We must get those civilities back if we are to make life kindly and tolerable for each other. We cannot get them back by invoking the law. The policeman is a necessary symbol and the law is a necessary institution for a society that is still somewhat lower than the angels. But the law can only protect us against material attack. Nor will the lift-man's way of meeting moral affront by physical violence help us to restore the civilities. I suggest to him that he would have had a more subtle and effective revenge if he had treated the gentleman who would not say "Please" with elaborate politeness. He would have had the victory, not only over the boor, but over himself,

and that is the victory that counts. The polite man may lose the material advantage, but he always has the spiritual victory. I commend to the lift-man a story of Chesterfield. In his time the London streets were without the pavements of to-day, and the man who "took the wall" had the driest footing. "I never give the wall to a scoundrel," said a man who met Chesterfield one day in the street. "I always do," said Chesterfield, stepping with a bow into the road. I hope the lift-man will agree that his revenge was much more sweet than if he had flung the fellow into the mud.

—*Alpha of the Plough* (*A. G. Gardiner*)

From "Many Furrows"
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THE PLAY OF ANIMALS

When we watch the kittens with their ball, the dogs and their sham hunt, the lambs and their races, the monkeys and their "tig," we see animals at play. It is well marked off from work, though it may be as hard; it is not mere exercise, though, perhaps, it exercises best; it has no serious end for the sake of which it is played, though it may be, while it lasts, most serious; it is not necessarily social, for many an animal (like many a man) seems to be quite happy playing alone; and it need not be competitive, though that often gives zest to it.

Some naturalists have thought that the play of young animals just means an overflow of vigour, energy and good spirits. This theory is simple; but it is too simple, and it breaks down. No doubt the young creature is an overflowing well of energy; but even the tired animal or child will turn in a moment from fatigue to play. It has also been pointed out that imitation counts for a great deal in animal play. The youngsters mimic in play what they see their seniors doing in earnest. There is truth in this, but it cannot be the whole truth. A kitten taken very early from the mother will play with zest, though it has no model to copy.

According to another view there are inborn play-instincts, characteristic in form for different animals. The trigger may be pulled by overflowing energy, and imitation may have some influence, but the love of play and the kind of play are born in the creature.

Play is justified in the business of life in at least two ways; firstly, because it is the apprenticeship to future

work, the training for serious efforts, the rehearsal before the real performance; and, secondly, because it gives an opportunity for sharpening wits and for learning before mistakes are too costly.

But we may go a step further. Play is more than the apprenticeship to future life and work. It is more than an opportunity for learning the alphabet of life. It is one of the few opportunities which allow new experiments to be made without too vigorous criticism. In the real business of life all sorts of novelties are very apt to be nipped in the bud. Play is Nature's device for allowing elbow-room for "new departures" which may form part of the raw materials of progress.

There seem to be two original forms of animal play —the play of movement, and the play of experiment. Let us, first of all, consider play of movement.

Play of Movement

"Most young things," Hamerton says, "appear to be reservoirs of pent-up natural energy that finds vent in irrepressible gambols." Insects gambol in the air, birds among the boughs, dolphins in the waves, and so on, endlessly—each in its own way. There is no use in it, except that the nerves and muscles are trained for future work. The heart beats more quickly, the breathing is more rapid, the surface blood-vessels become larger, and the player enjoys that happiness which is always the reward of wholesome activity.

Perhaps part of the meaning of this simplest form of play is to be found in the connection between pleasant emotion and muscular movements. Such exuberance of good spirits had the simple woodchopper portrayed in Thoreau's *Walden*, that when a thing amused him, "he sometimes tumbled down and rolled on the ground with

laughter." Perhaps we have here an expression of primitive playfulness.

When we see beautiful sights, or hear fine sounds, or the like, pleasant messages have, of course, travelled by our nerves into our brains. But they do not, so to speak, stop there. They set a-going other messages, which travel out to the heart, which beats differently; to the larynx, which vibrates; to the lungs even, and to other parts. In short, internal muscular movements occur. As the result of these, a third set of messages travel in again to the brain; and when the circle is completed, *we are pleased.* Perhaps in this way one gets nearer an understanding of certain gambols and of the vocal play —the song—of birds, in which internal movements are associated with strong emotions. In any case, there is reason to believe in a deep and subtle connection between emotion and motion. Literally, Wordsworth's heart leaped up when he beheld a rainbow in the sky, and filled with pleasure as he watched the dancing daffodils.

The play-nature of animal movements is clearest when there is something unusual about them. Thus Alix relates that on one occasion, when botanizing on the Alps, his dog ceased to follow him on the gradual path, and seemed deliberately to choose a long slope of frozen snow. There he lay down on his back, folded his legs, and slid down like a toboggan. At the foot he rose quietly, looked up to his astonished master, and wagged his tail. Alix imagined that his dog had thought out the short-cut; it is much more likely that it was simply play —done for fun.

Play of Experiment

Let us pass to the other original expression of the play-instinct, what we may call experimenting—when

animals test things, often pulling them to pieces; or test themselves, often performing interesting feats; or test their neighbours, finding out how they will answer back. For the endless task of finding out about the world has its play-form—which is one of the roots of science.

Speaking of his young goats, Mr. Hamerton says: "If there is a basket in the place which will hold one of them, and no more, the others will watch him with great interest, and as soon as he jumps out (which he is never very long in doing) the others inevitably jump in and out again by turns. A game of this kind will last till one of the kids has a new suggestion to make." One day it was the fashion among the kids to carry a little sprig of green between the lips; another day they tried to upset the artist by getting under his seat; from that they passed to experimenting with the big dog, till "he could stand it no longer and rushed out of the place, not trusting himself to refrain from using his mighty jaws, which would have crushed a kid's head like a nutshell."

In regard to her Capuchin monkey, Miss Romanes wrote: "He is very fond of upsetting things, but he always takes great care that they do not fall upon himself. Thus, he will pull a chair towards him till it is almost overbalanced; then he intently fixes his eyes on the top bar of the back, and, as he sees it coming over his way, darts from underneath, and watches the fall with great delight; and similarly with heavier things. There is a washhand-stand, for example, which he has upset several times, and always without hurting himself. One day he played for a long time with a hearth-brush, learning to unscrew the handle and, what was much more difficult, putting it together again. When he had become by practice tolerably perfect in screwing and unscrewing, he gave it up and took to some other amusement."

Sham Hunt and Sham Fight

Passing from gambol and experiment to somewhat subtler forms of play, we find that a number of animal games may be summed up under the title "sham hunt." Into this there seems to enter a certain amount of "make-believe." The booty may be real, as when the cat plays with the mouse, or both the booty and the chase may be fictitious. The sham booty may be living, as when the dog plays with a beetle; or, more commonly, not living, as when the kitten plays with a ball of twine.

Another type of play is the sham fight, which we see so often between puppies or kittens. It has been described among lions, tigers, hyænas, wolves, foxes, bears, and other carnivores; among lambs, kids, calves, foals, and other ungulates; it is also very common among birds. Care must be taken to distinguish sham fights from real fights, and it may be admitted that among animals, just as among boys, what begins in fun may readily pass into deadly earnest. In a vivid description of the behaviour of two young gluttons, Brehm says that nothing could be more playful, they are almost never at rest for a minute, they fight in fun all day, but every now and then the note of earnest is struck.

The sham fight is one of a large group of social plays, of which the characteristic note is rivalry—rivalry, however, which has no serious reference to any necessity of life. There is no doubt that competition gives zest to animal games as well as to those of man. It seems to be a pleasure to the animal as to us "*to be a cause*"; it is a greater pleasure to be a better "cause" than some one else. We see this in the races among lambs and kids, wild horses and asses; in the various forms of "tig" and "follow my leader" in monkeys; and in other rival

exhibitions of agility. Perhaps some forms of dance and song should be included here.

To sum up: There are many play-instincts among animals; they have been wrought out in the course of ages, partly as safety-valves for overflowing energy and spirits, partly because movements and feelings are naturally linked together, partly as opportunities for trying novelties before too stern criticism begins, but mainly as periods for educating powers which are important in after-life. Animals, Groos says, do not simply play because they are young; they continue young in order that they may play.

In short, play is so widespread because it is *the young form of work.* The animals who played best when young, worked best, lived best, perhaps loved best when they grew up, and thus through the long ages the play-instinct has been fostered. It is interesting, also, to notice that the animals which man has succeeded in domesticating are mostly playing animals.

Play is thus a rehearsal without responsibilities, a preliminary canter before the real race, a sham fight before the real battle, a joyous apprenticeship to the business of life. Thus our study of animals playing in the summer sunshine gives a deeper meaning to the familiar saying, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." May we not twist an old precept a little, and say, "Let us play while we can, so that we may work well when we will"?

—*J. Arthur Thomson*

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A MORAL EXIGENCY

At five o'clock Eunice Fairweather went upstairs to dress herself for the sociable and Christmas-tree to be given at the parsonage that night in honour of Christmas Eve. She had been very busy all day, making preparations for it. She was the minister's daughter, and had, of a necessity, to take an active part in such affairs.

She took it, as usual, loyally and energetically, but there had always been seasons from her childhood—and she was twenty-five now—when the social duties to which she had been born seemed a weariness and a bore to her. They had seemed so to-day. She had patiently and faithfully sewed up little lace bags with divers-coloured worsteds, and stuffed them with candy. She had strung pop-corn, and marked the parcels which had been pouring in since daybreak from all quarters. She had taken her prominent part among the corps of indefatigable women always present to assist on such occasions, and kept up her end of the line as minister's daughter bravely. Now, however, the last of the zealous, chattering women she had been working with had bustled home, with a pleasant importance in every hitch of her shawled shoulders, and would not bustle back again until half-past six or so; and the tree, fully bedecked, stood in unconscious impressiveness in the parsonage parlour.

Eunice had come upstairs with the resolution to dress herself directly for the festive occasion, and to hasten down again to be in readiness for new exigencies. Her mother was delicate, and had kept her room all day in order to prepare herself for the evening, her father was

inefficient at such times, there was no servant, and the brunt of everything came on her.

But her resolution gave way; she wrapped herself in an old plaid shawl and lay down on her bed to rest a few minutes. She did not close her eyes, but lay studying idly the familiar details of the room. It was small, and one side ran in under the eaves; for the parsonage was a cottage. There was one window, with a white cotton curtain trimmed with tasselled fringe, and looped up on an old porcelain knob with a picture painted on it. That knob, with its tiny bright landscape, had been one of the pretty wonders of Eunice's childhood. She looked at it even now with interest, and the marvel and the beauty of it had not wholly departed for her eyes. The walls of the little room had a scraggly-patterned paper on them. The first lustre of it had departed, for that too was one of the associates of Eunice's childhood, but in certain lights there was a satin sheen and a blue line visible. Blue roses on a satin ground had been the original pattern. It had never been pretty, but Eunice had always had faith in it. There was an ancient straw matting on the floor, a home-made braided rug before the cottage bedstead, and one before the stained-pine bureau. There were a few poor attempts at adornment on the walls; a splint letter-case, a motto worked in worsteds, a gay print of an eminently proper little girl holding a faithful little dog.

This last, in its brilliant crudeness, was not a work of art, but Eunice believed in it. She was a conservative creature. Even after her year at the seminary, for which money had been scraped together five years ago, she had the same admiring trust in all the revelations of her childhood. Her home, on her return to it, looked as fair to her as it had always done; no old ugliness which familiarity

had caused to pass unnoticed before gave her a shock of surprise.

She lay quietly, her shawl shrugged up over her face, so only her steady, light-brown eyes were visible. The room was drearily cold. She never had a fire; one in a sleeping room would have been sinful luxury in the poor minister's family. Even her mother's was only warmed from the sitting-room.

In sunny weather Eunice's room was cheerful, and its look, if not actually its atmosphere, would warm one a little, for the windows faced south-west. But to-day all the light had come through low, grey clouds, for it had been threatening snow ever since morning, and the room had been dismal.

A comfortless dusk was fast spreading over everything now. Eunice rose at length, thinking that she must either dress herself speedily or go downstairs for a candle.

She was a tall, heavily-built girl, with large, well-formed feet and hands. She had a full face, and a thick, colourless skin. Her features were coarse, but their combination affected one pleasantly. It was a staunch, honest face, with a suggestion of obstinacy in it.

She looked unhappily at herself in her little square glass, as she brushed out her hair and arranged it in a smooth twist at the top of her head. It was not becoming, but it was the way she had always done it. She did not admire the effect herself when the coiffure was complete, neither did she survey her appearance complacently when she had gotten into her best brown cashmere dress, with its ruffle of starched lace in the neck. But it did not occur to her that any change could be made for the better. It was her best dress, and it was the way she did up her hair. She did not like either, but the simple facts of them ended the matter for her.

After the same fashion she regarded her own lot in life, with a sort of resigned disapproval.

On account of her mother's ill-health, she had been encumbered for the last five years with the numberless social duties to which the wife of a poor country minister is liable. She had been active in Sunday-school picnics and church sociables, in mission bands and neighbourhood prayer-meetings. She was a church member and a good girl, but the *rôle* did not suit her. Still she accepted it as inevitable, and would no more have thought of evading it than she would have thought of evading life altogether. There was about her an almost stubborn steadfastness of onward movement that would for ever keep her in the same rut, no matter how disagreeable it might be, unless some influence outside of herself might move her.

When she went downstairs, she found her mother seated beside the sitting-room stove, also arrayed in her best—a shiny black silk, long in the shoulder-seams, the tops of the sleeves adorned with pointed caps trimmed with black velvet ribbon.

She looked up at Eunice as she entered, a complacent smile on her long, delicate face; she thought her homely, honest-looking daughter charming in her best gown.

A murmur of men's voices came from the next room, whose door was closed.

"Father's got Mr. Wilson in there," explained Mrs. Fairweather, in response to Eunice's inquiring glance. "He came just after you went upstairs. They've been talking very busily about something. Perhaps Mr. Wilson wants to exchange."

Just at that moment the study door opened and the two men came out, Eunice's father, tall and round-shouldered, with greyish sandy hair and beard, politely allowing his guest to precede him. There was a little

resemblance between the two, though there was no relationship. Mr. Wilson was a younger man by ten years; he was shorter and slighter; but he had similarly sandy hair and beard, though they were not quite so grey, and something the same cast of countenance. He was settled over a neighbouring parish; he was a widower with four young children; his wife had died a year before.

He had spoken to Mrs. Fairweather on his first entrance, so he stepped directly towards Eunice with extended hand. His ministerial affability was slightly dashed with embarrassment, and his thin cheeks were crimson around the roots of his sandy beard.

Eunice shook the proffered hand with calm courtesy, and inquired after his children. She had not a thought that his embarrassment betokened anything, if, indeed, she observed it at all.

Her father stood by with an air of awkward readiness to proceed to action, waiting until the two should cease the interchanging of courtesies.

When the expected pause came he himself placed a chair for Mr. Wilson. "Sit down, brother Wilson," he said nervously, "and I will consult with my daughter concerning the matter we were speaking of. Eunice, I would like to speak with you a moment in the study."

"Certainly, sir," said Eunice. She looked surprised, but she followed him at once into the study. "Tell me as quickly as you can what it is, father," she said, "for it is nearly time for people to begin coming, and I shall have to attend to them."

She had not seated herself, but stood leaning carelessly against the study wall, questioning her father with her steady eyes.

He stood in his awkward height before her. He was plainly trembling. "Eunice," he said, in a shaking

voice, "Mr. Wilson came—to say—he would like to marry you, my dear daughter."

He cleared his throat to hide his embarrassment. He felt a terrible constraint in speaking to Eunice of such matters; he looked shamefaced and distressed.

Eunice eyed him steadily. She did not change colour in the least. "I think I would rather remain as I am, father," she said quietly.

Her father roused himself then. "My dear daughter," he said with restrained eagerness, "don't decide this matter too hastily, without giving it all the consideration it deserves. Mr. Wilson is a good man; he would make you a worthy husband, and he needs a wife sadly. Think what a wide field of action would be before you with those four little motherless children to love and care for! You would have a wonderful opportunity to do good."

"I don't think," said Eunice bluntly, "that I should care for that sort of an opportunity."

"Then," her father went on, "you will forgive me if I speak plainly, my dear. You—are getting older; you have not had any other visitors. You would be well provided for in this way—"

"Exceedingly well," replied Eunice slowly. "There would be six hundred dollars a year and a leaky parsonage for a man and woman and four children, and—nobody knows how many more." She was almost coarse in her slow indignation, and did not blush at it.

"The Lord would provide for his servants."

"I don't know whether he would or not. I don't think he would be under any obligation to if his servant deliberately encumbered himself with more of a family than he had brains to support."

Her father looked so distressed that Eunice's heart

smote her for her forcible words. "You don't want to get rid of me, surely, father," she said, in a changed tone.

Mr. Fairweather's lips moved uncertainly as he answered: "No, my dear daughter; don't ever let such a thought enter your head. I only—Mr. Wilson is a good man, and a woman is best off married, and your mother and I are old. I have never laid up anything. Sometimes—— May be I don't trust the Lord enough, but I have felt anxious about you, if anything happened to me." Tears were standing in his light-blue eyes, which had never been so steady and keen as his daughter's.

There came a loud peal of the door-bell. Eunice started. "There! I must go," she said. "We'll talk about this another time. Don't worry about it, father dear."

"But, Eunice, what shall I say to him?"

"Must something be said to-night?"

"It would hardly be treating him fairly otherwise."

Eunice looked hesitatingly at her father's worn, anxious face. "Tell him," she said at length, "that I will give him his answer in a week."

Her father looked gratified. "We will take it to the Lord, my dear."

Eunice's lip curled curiously, but she said, "Yes, sir," dutifully, and hastened from the room to answer the door-bell.

The fresh bevies that were constantly arriving after that engaged her whole attention. She could do no more than give a hurried "Good-evening" to Mr. Wilson when he came to take leave, after a second short conference with her father in the study. He looked deprecatingly hopeful.

The poor man was really in a sad case. Six years ago, when he married, he had been romantic. He would never

be again. He was not thirsting for love and communion with a kindred spirit now, but for a good, capable woman who would take care of his four clamorous children without a salary.

He returned to his shabby, dirty parsonage that night with, it seemed to him, quite a reasonable hope that his affairs might soon be changed for the better. Of course he would have preferred that the lady should have said yes directly; it would both have assured him and shortened the time until his burdens should be lightened; but he could hardly have expected that, when his proposal was so sudden, and there had been no preliminary attention on his part. The week's probation, therefore, did not daunt him much. He did not really see why Eunice should refuse him. She was plain, was getting older; it probably was her first, and very likely her last, chance of marriage. He was a clergyman in good standing, and she would not lower her social position. He felt sure that he was now about to be relieved from the unpleasant predicament in which he had been ever since his wife's death, and from which he had been forced to make no effort to escape, for decency's sake, for a full year. The year, in fact, had been up five days ago. He actually took credit to himself for remaining quiescent during those five days. It was rather shocking, but there was a good deal to be said for him. No wife and four small children, six hundred dollars a year, moderate brain, and an active conscience, are a hard combination of circumstances for any man.

To-night, however, he returned thanks to the Lord for his countless blessings with pious fervour, which would have been lessened had he known of the state of Eunice's mind just at that moment.

The merry company had all departed, the tree stood

dismantled in the parlour, and she was preparing for bed, with her head full, not of him, but another man.

Standing before her glass, combing out her rather scanty, lustreless hair, her fancy pictured to her, beside her own homely, sober face, another, a man's, blonde and handsome, with a gentle, almost womanish smile on the full red lips, and a dangerous softness in the blue eyes. Could a third person have seen the double picture as she did, he would have been struck with a sense of the incongruity, almost absurdity, of it. Eunice herself, with her hard, uncompromising common-sense, took the attitude of a third person in regard to it, and at length blew her light out and went to bed, with a bitter amusement in her heart at her own folly.

There had been present that evening a young man who was a comparatively recent acquisition to the village society. He had been in town about three months. His father, two years before, had purchased one of the largest farms in the vicinity, moving there from an adjoining State. This son had been absent at the time; he was reported to be running a cattle ranch in one of those distant territories which seem almost fabulous to New-Englanders. Since he had come home he had been the cynosure of the village. He was thirty and a little over, but he was singularly boyish in his ways, and took part in all the town frolics with gusto. He was popularly supposed to be engaged to Ada Harris, Squire Harris's daughter, as she was often called. Her father was the prominent man of the village, lived in the best house, and had the loudest voice in public matters. He was a lawyer, with rather more pomposity than ability, perhaps, but there had always been money and influence in the Harris family, and these warded off all criticism.

The daughter was a pretty blonde of average attainments, but with keen wits and strong passions. She had not been present at the Christmas tree, and her lover, either on that account, or really from some sudden fancy he had taken to Eunice, had been at her elbow the whole evening. He had a fashion of making his attentions marked: he did on that occasion. He made a pretence of assisting her, but it was only a pretence, and she knew it, though she thought it marvellous. She had met him, but had not before exchanged two words with him. She had seen him with Ada Harris, and he had seemed almost as much out of her life as a lover in a book. Young men of his kind were unknown quantities heretofore to this steady, homely young woman. They seemed to belong to other girls.

So his devotion to her through the evening, and his asking permission to call when he took leave, seemed to her well-nigh incredible. Her head was not turned, in the usual acceptation of the term—it was not an easy head to turn—but it was full of Burr Mason, and every thought, no matter how wide a starting-point it had, lost itself at last in the thought of him.

Mr. Wilson's proposal weighed upon her terribly through the next week. Her father seemed bent upon her accepting it; so did her mother, who sighed in secret over the prospect of her daughter's remaining unmarried. Either through unworldliness, or their conviction of the desirability of the marriage in itself, the meagreness of the financial outlook did not seem to influence them in the least.

Eunice did not once think of Burr Mason as any reason for her reluctance, but when he called the day but one before her week of probation was up, and when

he took her to drive the next day, she decided on a refusal of the minister's proposal easily enough. She had wavered a little before.

So Mr. Wilson was left to decide upon some other worthy, reliable woman as a subject for his addresses, and Eunice kept on with her new lover.

How this sober, conscientious girl could reconcile to herself the course she was now taking, was a question. It was probable she did not make the effort; she was so sensible that she would have known its futility and hypocrisy beforehand.

She knew her lover had been engaged to Ada Harris; that she was encouraging him in cruel and dishonourable treatment of another woman; but she kept steadily on. People even came to her and told her that the jilted girl was breaking her heart. She listened, her homely face set in an immovable calm. She listened quietly to her parents' remonstrance, and kept on.

There was an odd quality in Burr Mason's character. He was terribly vacillating, but he knew it. Once he said to Eunice, with the careless freedom that would have been almost insolence in another man: "Don't let me see Ada Harris much, I warn you, dear. I mean to be true to you, but she has such a pretty face, and I meant to be true to her, but you have—I don't know just what, but something she has not."

Eunice knew the truth of what he said perfectly. The incomprehensibleness of it all to her, who was so sensible of her own disadvantages, was the fascination she had for such a man.

A few days after Burr Mason had made that remark Ada Harris came to see her. When Eunice went into the sitting-room to greet her, she kept her quiet, unmoved

face, but the change in the girl before her was terrible. It was not wasting of flesh or pallor that it consisted in, but something worse. Her red lips were set so hard that the soft curves in them were lost, her cheeks burned feverishly, her blue eyes had a fierce light in them, and, most pitiful thing of all for another woman to see, she had not crimped her pretty blond hair, but wore it combed straight back from her throbbing forehead.

When Eunice entered, she waited for no preliminary courtesies, but sprang forward, and caught hold of her hand with a strong, nervous grasp, and stood so, her pretty, desperate face confronting Eunice's calm, plain one.

"Eunice!" she cried, "Eunice! why did you take him away from me? Eunice! Eunice!" Then she broke into a low wail, without any tears.

Eunice released her hand, and seated herself. "You had better take a chair, Ada," she said, in her slow, even tones. "When you say *him*, you mean Burr Mason, I suppose."

"You know I do. O Eunice! how could you? how could you? I thought you were so good!"

"You ask me why *I* do this and that, but don't you think he had anything to do with it himself?"

Ada stood before her, clinching her little white hands. "Eunice Fairweather, you know Burr Mason, and I know Burr Mason. You know that if you gave him up, and refused to see him, he would come back to me. You know it."

"Yes, I know it."

"You know it; you sit there and say you know it, and yet you do this cruel thing—you, a minister's daughter. You understood from the first how it was.

You knew he was mine, that you had no right to him. You knew if you shunned him ever so little, that he would come back to me. And yet you let him come and make love to you. You knew it. There is no excuse for you: you knew it. It is no better for him. You have encouraged him in being false. You have dragged him down. You are a plainer girl than I, and a soberer one, but you are no better. You will not make him a better wife. You cannot make him a good wife after this. It is all for yourself—yourself!"

Eunice sat still.

Then Ada flung herself on her knees at her side, and pleaded, as for her life. "Eunice, O Eunice, give him up to me! It is killing me! Eunice, dear Eunice, say you will!"

As Eunice sat looking at the poor, dishevelled golden head bowed over her lap, a recollection flashed across her mind, oddly enough, of a certain recess at the village school they two had attended years ago, when she was among the older girls, and Ada a child to her: how she had played she was her little girl, and held her in her lap, and that golden head had nestled on her bosom.

"Eunice, O Eunice, he loved me first. You had better have stolen away my own heart. It would not have been so wicked or so cruel. How could you? O Eunice, give him back to me, Eunice, *won't you?*"

"No."

Ada rose, staggering, without another word. She moaned a little to herself as she crossed the room to the door. Eunice accompanied her to the outer door, and said good-bye. Ada did not return it. Eunice saw her steady herself by catching hold of the gate as she passed through.

Then she went slowly upstairs to her own room, wrapped herself in a shawl, and lay down on her bed, as she had that Christmas Eve. She was very pale, and there was a strange look, almost of horror, on her face. She stared, as she lay there, at all the familiar objects in the room, but the most common and insignificant of them had a strange and awful look to her. Yet the change was in herself, not in them. The shadow that was over her own soul overshadowed them and perverted her vision. But she felt also almost a fear of all those inanimate objects she was gazing at. They were so many reminders of a better state with her, for she had gazed at them all in her unconscious childhood. She was sickened with horror at their dumb accusations. There was the little glass she had looked in before she had stolen another woman's dearest wealth away from her, the chair she had sat in, the bed she had lain in.

At last Eunice Fairweather's strong will broke down before the accusations of her own conscience, which were so potent as to take upon themselves material shapes.

Ada Harris, in her pretty chamber, lying worn out on her bed, her face buried in the pillow, started at a touch on her shoulder. Some one had stolen into the room unannounced—not her mother, for she was waiting outside. Ada turned her head, and saw Eunice. She struck at her wildly with her slender hands. "Go away!" she screamed.

"Ada!"

"Go away!"

"Burr Mason is downstairs. I came with him to call on you."

Ada sat upright, staring at her, her hand still uplifted.

"I am going to break my engagement with him."

"O Eunice! Eunice! you blessed—"

Eunice drew the golden head down on her bosom, just as she had on that old school-day.

"Love me all you can, Ada," she said. "I want—something."

—*Mary E. Wilkins Freeman*

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ON WORD-MAGIC

I see that a discussion has arisen in the *Spectator* on the *Canadian Boat Song*. It appeared in *Blackwood's* nearly a century ago, and ever since its authorship has been the subject of recurrent controversy. The author may have been "Christopher North," or his brother, Tom Wilson, or Galt, or the Ettrick Shepherd, or the Earl of Eglinton, or none of these. We shall never know. It is one of those pleasant mysteries of the past, like the authorship of the Junius Letters (if, indeed, that can be called a mystery), which can never be exhausted because they can never be solved. I am not going to offer an opinion; for I have none, and I refer to the subject only to illustrate the magic of a word. The poem lives by virtue of the famous stanza:

> From the lone shieling of the misty island
> Mountains divide us, and the waste of seas—
> Yet still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland,
> And we in dreams behold the Hebrides.

It would be an insensible heart that did not feel the surge of this strong music. The yearning of the exile for the motherland has never been uttered with more poignant beauty, though Stevenson came near the same note of tender anguish in the lines written in far Samoa and ending:

> Be it granted me to behold you again, in dying,
> Hills of home, and to hear again the call,
> Hear about the graves of the martyrs the peewees crying—
> And hear no more at all.

But for energy and masculine emotion the unknown author takes the palm. The verse is like a great wave of

the sea, rolling in to the mother shore, gathering impetus and grandeur as it goes, culminating in the note of vision and scattering itself triumphantly in the splendour of that word "Hebrides."

It is a beautiful illustration of the magic of a word used in its perfect setting. It gathers up the emotion of the theme into one chord of fulfilment and flings open the casement of the mind to far horizons. It is not the only instance in which the name has been used with extraordinary effect. Wordsworth's *Solitary Reaper* has many beautiful lines, but the peculiar glory of the poem dwells in the couplet in which, searching for parallels for the song of the Highland girl that fills "the vale profound," he hears in imagination the cuckoo's call

> Breaking the silence of the seas
> Among the farthest Hebrides.

Wordsworth, like Homer and Milton, and all who touch the sublime in poetry, had the power of transmuting a proper name to a strange and significant beauty. The most memorable example, perhaps, is in the closing lines of the poem to Dorothy Wordsworth:

> But an old age serene and bright,
> And lovely as a Lapland night,
> Shall lead thee to thy grave.

"Lapland" is an intrinsically beautiful word, but it is its setting in this case that makes it shine, pure and austere, like a star in the heavens of poetry. And the miraculous word need not be intrinsically beautiful. Darien is not, yet it is that word in which perhaps the greatest of all sonnets finds its breathless, astonished close:

> Silent—upon a peak—in Dar—ien.

And the truth is that the magic of words is not in the words themselves, but in the distinction, delicacy, surprise

of their use. Take the great line which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Antony:

> I am dying, Egypt, dying.

It is the only occasion in the play on which he makes Antony speak of Cleopatra by her territorial name and there is no warrant for the usage in Plutarch. It is a stroke of sheer word-magic. It summons up with a sudden magnificence all the mystery and splendour incarnated in the woman for whom he has gambled away the world and all the earthly glories that are fading into the darkness of death. The whole tragedy seems to flame to its culmination in this word that suddenly lifts the action from the human plane to the scale of cosmic drama.

Words, of course, have an individuality, a perfume of their own, but just as the flame in the heart of the diamond has to be revealed by the craftsman, so the true magic of a beautiful word only discloses itself at the touch of the master. "Quiet" is an ordinary enough word, and few are more frequently on our lips. Yet what wonderful effects Wordsworth, Coleridge. and Keats extract from it:

> It is a beauteous evening, calm and free;
> The holy time is quiet as a nun,
> Breathless with adoration.

The whole passage is a symphony of the sunset, but it is that ordinary word "quiet" which breathes like a benediction through the cadence, filling the mind with the sense of an illimitable peace. And so with Coleridge's "singeth a quiet tune," or Keats'

> Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

Or when, "half in love with easeful Death," he

> Called him soft names in many a musèd rhyme
> To take into the air my quiet breath.

And again:

> Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
> Sat gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone.

There have been greater poets than Keats, but none who has had a surer instinct for the precious word than he had. Byron had none of this magician touch, Shelley got his effects by the glow and fervour of his spirit; Swinburne by the sheer torrent of his song, and Browning by the energy of his thought. Tennyson was much more of the artificer in words than these, but he had not the secret of the word-magic of Shakespeare, Wordsworth, or Keats. Compare the use of adjectives in two things like Shelley's *Ode to the Skylark* and Keats' *Ode to the Nightingale*, and the difference is startling. Both are incomparable, but in the one case it is the hurry of the song, the flood of rapture that delights us: in the other each separate line holds us with its jewelled word. "*Embalmed* darkness," "*Verdurous* glooms," "Now more than ever seems it *rich* to die," "Cooled a long age in the *deep-delved* earth." "*Darkling* I listen." "She stood in tears amid the *alien* corn." "Oh, for a beaker full of the *warm south.*" "With beaded bubbles *winking* at the brim." "No *hungry* generations tread thee down." And so on. Such a casket of jewels can be found in no other poet that has used our tongue. If Keats' vocabulary had a defect it was a certain over-ripeness, a languorous beauty that, like the touch of his hand, spoke of death. It lacked the fresh, happy, sunlit spirit of Shakespeare's sovran word.

Word-magic belongs to poetry. In prose it is an intrusion. That was the view of Coleridge. It was because, among its other qualities, Southey's writing was so free from the shock of the dazzling word that Coleridge held it to be the perfect example of pure prose. The

modulations are so just, the note so unaffected, the current so clear and untroubled that you read on without pausing once to think "What a brilliant writer this fellow is." And that is the true triumph of the art. It is an art which addresses itself to the mind, and not the emotions, and word-magic does not belong to its true armoury.

—*Alpha of the Plough* (*A. G. Gardiner*)

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SEATON'S AUNT

I had heard rumours of Seaton's Aunt long before I actually encountered her. Seaton, in the hush of confidence, or at any little show of toleration on our part, would remark, "My aunt," or "My old aunt, you know," as if his relative might be a kind of cement to an *entente cordiale*.

He had an unusual quantity of pocket-money; or, at any rate, it was bestowed on him in unusually large amounts; and he spent it freely, though none of us would have described him as an "awfully generous chap." "Hullo, Seaton," we would say, "the old Begum?" At the beginning of term, too, he used to bring back surprising and exotic dainties in a box with a trick padlock that accompanied him from his first appearance at Gummidge's in a billycock hat to the rather abrupt conclusion of his schooldays.

From a boy's point of view he looked distastefully foreign, with his yellow skin, and slow chocolate-coloured eyes, and lean weak figure. Merely for his looks he was treated by most of us true-blue Englishmen with condescension, hostility, or contempt. We used to call him "Pongo," but without any much better excuse for the nickname than his skin. He was, that is, in one sense of the term what he assuredly was not in the other sense, a sport.

Seaton and I, as I may say, were never in any sense intimate at school; our orbits only intersected in class. I kept deliberately aloof from him. I felt vaguely he was a sneak, and remained quite unmollified by advances

on his side, which, in a boy's barbarous fashion, unless it suited me to be magnanimous, I haughtily ignored.

We were both of us quick-footed, and at Prisoner's Base used occasionally to hide together. And so I best remember Seaton—his narrow watchful face in the dusk of a summer evening; his peculiar crouch, and his inarticulate whisperings and mumblings. Otherwise he played all games slackly and limply; used to stand and feed at his locker with a crony or two until his "tuck" gave out; or waste his money on some outlandish fancy or other. He bought, for instance, a silver bangle, which he wore above his left elbow, until some of the fellows showed their masterly contempt of the practice by dropping it nearly red-hot down his neck.

It needed, therefore, a rather peculiar taste, a rather rare kind of schoolboy courage and indifference to criticism, to be much associated with him. And I had neither the taste nor, perhaps, the courage. None the less, he did make advances, and on one memorable occasion went to the length of bestowing on me a whole pot of some outlandish mulberry-coloured jelly that had been duplicated in his term's supplies. In the exuberance of my gratitude I promised to spend the next half-term holiday with him at his aunt's house.

I had clean forgotten my promise when, two or three days before the holiday, he came up and triumphantly reminded me of it.

"Well, to tell you the honest truth, Seaton, old chap—" I began graciously: but he cut me short.

"My aunt expects you," he said; "she is very glad you are coming. She's sure to be quite decent to *you*, Withers."

I looked at him in sheer astonishment; the emphasis was so uncalled for. It seemed to suggest an aunt not

hitherto hinted at, and a friendly feeling on Seaton's side that was far more disconcerting than welcome.

We reached his home partly by train, partly by a lift in an empty farm-cart, and partly by walking. It was a whole-day holiday, and we were to sleep the night; he lent me extraordinary night-gear, I remember. The village street was unusually wide, and was fed from a green by two converging roads, with an inn, and a high green sign at the corner. About a hundred yards down the street was a chemist's shop—a Mr. Tanner's. We descended the two steps into his dusky and odorous interior to buy, I remember, some rat poison. A little beyond the chemist's was the forge. You then walked along a very narrow path, under a fairly high wall, nodding here and there with weeds and tufts of grass, and so came to the iron garden-gates, and saw the high flat house behind its huge sycamore. A coach-house stood on the left of the house, and on the right a gate led into a kind of rambling orchard. The lawn lay away over to the left again, and at the bottom (for the whole garden sloped gently to a sluggish and rushy pond-like stream) was a meadow.

We arrived at noon, and entered the gates out of the hot dust beneath the glitter of the dark-curtained windows. Seaton led me at once through the little garden-gate to show me his tadpole pond, swarming with what (being myself not in the least interested in low life) I considered the most horrible creatures—of all shapes, consistencies, and sizes, but with whom Seaton seemed to be on the most intimate of terms. I can see his absorbed face now as he sat on his heels and fished the slimy things out in his sallow palms. Wearying at last of these pets, we loitered about awhile in an aimless

fashion. Seaton seemed to be listening, or at any rate waiting, for something to happen or for someone to come. But nothing did happen and no one came.

That was just like Seaton. Anyhow, the first view I got of his aunt was when, at the summons of a distant gong, we turned from the garden, very hungry and thirsty, to go into luncheon. We were approaching the house when Seaton suddenly came to a standstill. Indeed, I have always had the impression that he plucked at my sleeve. Something, at least, seemed to catch me back, as it were, as he cried, "Look out, there she is!"

She was standing at an upper window which opened wide on a hinge, and at first sight she looked an excessively tall and overwhelming figure. This, however, was mainly because the window reached all but to the floor of her bedroom. She was in reality rather an undersized woman, in spite of her long face and big head. She must have stood, I think, unusually still, with eyes fixed on us, though this impression may be due to Seaton's sudden warning and to my consciousness of the cautious and subdued air that had fallen on him at sight of her. I know that without the least reason in the world I felt a kind of guiltiness, as if I had been "caught." There was a silvery star pattern sprinkled on her black silk dress, and even from the ground I could see the immense coils of her hair and the rings on her left hand which was held fingering the small jet buttons of her bodice. She watched our united advance without stirring, until, imperceptibly, her eyes raised and lost themselves in the distance, so that it was out of an assumed reverie that she appeared suddenly to awaken to our presence beneath her when we drew close to the house.

"So this is your friend, Mr. Smithers, I suppose?" she said, bobbing to me.

"Withers, aunt," said Seaton.

"It's much the same," she said, with eyes fixed on me. "Come in, Mr. Withers, and bring him along with you."

She continued to gaze at me—at least, I think she did so. I know that the fixity of her scrutiny and her ironical "Mr." made me feel peculiarly uncomfortable. None the less she was extremely kind and attentive to me, though, no doubt, her kindness and attention showed up more vividly against her complete neglect of Seaton. Only one remark that I have any recollection of she made to him: "When I look on my nephew, Mr. Smithers, I realize that dust we are, and dust shall become. You are hot, dirty, and incorrigible, Arthur."

She sat at the head of the table, Seaton at the foot, and I, before a wide waste of damask tablecloth, between them. It was an old and rather close dining-room, with windows thrown wide to the green garden and a wonderful cascade of fading roses. Miss Seaton's great chair faced this window, so that its rose-reflected light shone full on her yellowish face, and on just such chocolate eyes as my schoolfellow's, except that hers were more than half-covered by unusually long and heavy lids.

There she sat, steadily eating, with those sluggish eyes fixed for the most part on my face; above them stood the deep-lined fork between her eyebrows; and above that the wide expanse of a remarkable brow beneath its strange steep bank of hair. The lunch was copious, and consisted, I remember, of all such dishes as are generally considered too rich and too good for the schoolboy digestion—lobster mayonnaise, cold game sausages, an immense veal and ham pie farced with eggs, truffles, and numberless delicious flavours; besides kickshaws, creams and sweetmeats. We even had wine, a half-glass of old darkish sherry each.

Miss Seaton enjoyed and indulged an enormous appetite. Her example and a natural schoolboy voracity soon overcame my nervousness of her, even to the extent of allowing me to enjoy to the best of my bent so rare a spread. Seaton was singularly modest; the greater part of his meal consisted of almonds and raisins, which he nibbled surreptitiously and as if he found difficulty in swallowing them.

I don't mean that Miss Seaton "conversed" with me. She merely scattered trenchant remarks and now and then twinkled a baited question over my head. But her face was like a dense and involved accompaniment to her talk. She presently dropped the "Mr.," to my intense relief, and called me now Withers, or Wither, now Smithers, and even once towards the close of the meal distinctly Johnson, though how on earth my name suggested it, or whose face mine had reanimated in memory, I cannot conceive.

"And is Arthur a good boy at school, Mr. Wither?" was one of her many questions. "Does he please his masters? Is he first in his class? What does the reverend Dr. Gummidge think of him, eh?"

I knew she was jeering at him, but her face was adamant against the least flicker of sarcasm or facetiousness. I gazed fixedly at a blushing crescent of lobster.

"I think you're eighth, aren't you, Seaton?"

Seaton moved his small pupils towards his aunt. But she continued to gaze with a kind of concentrated detachment at me.

"Arthur will never make a brilliant scholar, I fear," she said, lifting a dexterously-burdened fork to her wide mouth. . . .

After luncheon she preceded me up to my bedroom. It was a jolly little bedroom, with a brass fender and rugs

and a polished floor, on which it was possible, I afterwards found, to play "snow-shoes." Over the washstand was a little black-framed water-colour drawing, depicting a large eye with an extremely fishlike intensity in the spark of light on the dark pupil; and in "illuminated" lettering beneath was printed very minutely, "Thou God Seest ME," followed by a long looped monogram, "S.S.," in the corner. The other pictures were all of the sea: brigs on blue water; a schooner overtopping chalk cliffs; a rocky island of prodigious steepness, with two tiny sailors dragging a monstrous boat up a shelf of beach.

"This is the room, Withers, my brother William died in when a boy. Admire the view!"

I looked out of the window across the tree-tops. It was a day hot with sunshine over the green fields, and the cattle were standing swishing their tails in the shallow water. But the view at the moment was only exaggeratedly vivid because I was horribly dreading that she would presently enquire after my luggage, and I had not brought even a toothbrush. I need have had no fear. Hers was not that highly-civilized type of mind that is stuffed with sharp, material details. Nor could her ample presence be described as in the least motherly.

"I would never consent to question a schoolfellow behind my nephew's back," she said, standing in the middle of the room, "but tell me, Smithers, why is Arthur so unpopular? You, I understand, are his only close friend." She stood in a dazzle of sun, and out of it her eyes regarded me with such leaden penetration beneath their thick lids that I doubt if my face concealed the least thought from her. "But there, there," she added very suavely, stooping her head a little, "don't trouble to answer me. I never extort an answer. Boys are queer fish. Brains might perhaps have suggested his washing

his hands before luncheon; but—not my choice, Smithers. God forbid! And now, perhaps, you would like to go into the garden again. I cannot actually see from here, but I should not be surprised if Arthur is now skulking behind that hedge."

He was. I saw his head come out and take a rapid glance at the windows.

"Join him, Mr. Smithers; we shall meet again, I hope, at the tea-table The afternoon I spend in retirement."

Whether or not, Seaton and I had not been long engaged with the aid of two green switches in riding round and round a lumbering old gray horse we found in the meadow, before a rather bunched-up figure appeared, walking along the field-path on the other side of the water, with a magenta parasol studiously lowered in our direction throughout her slow progress, as if that were the magnetic needle and we the fixed Pole. Seaton at once lost all nerve in his riding. At the next lurch of the old mare's heels he toppled over into the grass, and I slid off the sleek broad back to join him where he stood, rubbing his shoulder and sourly watching the rather pompous figure till it was out of sight.

"Was that your aunt, Seaton?" I enquired; but not till then.

He nodded.

"Why didn't she take any notice of us, then?"

"She never does."

"Why not?"

"Oh, she knows all right, without; that's the dam awful part of it." Seaton was about the only fellow at Gummidge's who ever had the ostentation to use bad language. He had suffered for it too. But it wasn't, I think, bravado. I believe he really felt certain things

more intensely than most of the other fellows, and they were generally things that fortunate and average people do not feel at all—the peculiar quality, for instance, of the British schoolboy's imagination.

"I tell you, Withers," he went on moodily, slinking across the meadow with his hands covered up in his pockets, "she sees everything. And what she doesn't see she knows without."

"But how?" I said, not because I was much interested, but because the afternoon was so hot and tiresome and purposeless, and it seemed more of a bore to remain silent. Seaton turned gloomily and spoke in a very low voice.

"Don't appear to be talking of her, if you wouldn't mind. It's—because she's in league with the devil." He nodded his head and stooped to pick up a round flat pebble. "I tell you," he said, still stooping, "you fellows don't realize what it is. I know I'm a bit close and all that. But so would you be if you had that old hag listening to every thought you think."

I looked at him, then turned and surveyed one by one the windows of the house.

"Where's your *pater?*" I said awkwardly.

"Dead, ages and ages ago, and my mother too. She's not my aunt by rights."

"What is she, then?"

"I mean she's not my mother's sister, because my grandmother married twice; and she's one of the first lot. I don't know what you call her. but anyhow she's not my real aunt."

"She gives you plenty of pocket-money."

Seaton looked steadfastly at me out of his flat eyes. "She can't give me what's mine. When I come of age half of the whole lot will be mine; and what's more"—

he turned his back on the house—"I'll make her hand over every blessed shilling of it."

I put my hands in my pockets and stared at Seaton; "Is it much?"

He nodded.

"Who told you?" He got suddenly very angry; a darkish red came into his cheeks, his eyes glistened, but he made no answer, and we loitered listlessly about the garden until it was time for tea. . . .

Seaton's aunt was wearing an extraordinary kind of lace jacket when we sidled sheepishly into the drawing-room together. She greeted me with a heavy and protracted smile, and bade me bring a chair close to the little table.

"I hope Arthur has made you feel at home," she said as she handed me my cup in her crooked hand. "He don't talk much to me; but then I'm an old woman. You must come again, Wither, and draw him out of his shell. You old snail!" She wagged her head at Seaton, who sat munching cake and watching her intently.

"And we must correspond, perhaps." She nearly shut her eyes at me. "You must write and tell me everything behind the creature's back." I confess I found her rather disquieting company. The evening drew on. Lamps were brought in by a man with a nondescript face and very quiet footsteps. Seaton was told to bring out the chess-men. And we played a game, she and I, with her big chin thrust over the board at every move as she gloated over the pieces and occasionally croaked "Check!"—after which she would sit back inscrutably staring at me. But the game was never finished. She simply hemmed me defencelessly in with a cloud of men that held me impotent, and yet one and all refused to administer to my poor flustered old king a merciful *coup de grâce*.

"There," she said, as the clock struck ten—"a drawn game, Withers. We are very evenly matched. A very creditable defence, Withers. You know your room. There's supper on a tray in the dining-room. Don't let the creature over-eat himself. The gong will sound three-quarters of an hour *before* a punctual breakfast." She held out her cheek to Seaton, and he kissed it with obvious perfunctoriness. With me she shook hands.

"An excellent game," she said cordially, "but my memory is poor, and"—she swept the pieces helter-skelter into the box—"the result will never be known." She raised her great head far back. "Eh?"

It was a kind of challenge, and I could only murmur: "Oh, I was absolutely in a hole, you know!" when she burst out laughing and waved us both out of the room.

Seaton and I stood and ate our supper, with one candlestick to light us, in a corner of the dining-room. "Well, and how would you like it?" he said very softly, after cautiously poking his head round the doorway.

"Like what?"

"Being spied on—every blessed thing you do and think?"

"I shouldn't like it at all," I said, "if she does."

"And yet you let her smash you up at chess!"

"I didn't let her!" I said, indignantly.

"Well, you funked it, then."

"And I didn't funk it either," I said; "she's so jolly clever with her knights." Seaton stared fixedly at the candle. "You wait, that's all," he said slowly. And we went upstairs to bed.

I had not been long in bed, I think, when I was cautiously awakened by a touch on my shoulder. And there was Seaton's face in the candlelight—and his eyes looking into mine.

"What's up?" I said, rising quickly to my elbow.

"Don't scurry," he whispered, "or she'll hear. I'm sorry for waking you, but I didn't think you'd be asleep so soon."

"Why, what's the time, then?" Seaton wore, what was then rather unusual, a night-suit, and he hauled his big silver watch out of the pocket in his jacket.

"It's a quarter to twelve. I never get to sleep before twelve—not here."

"What do you do, then?"

"Oh, I read and listen."

"Listen?"

Seaton stared into his candle-flame as if he were listening even then. "You can't guess what it is. All you read in ghost stories, that's all rot. You can't see much, Withers, but you know all the same."

"Know what?"

"Why, that they're there."

"Who's there?" I asked fretfully, glancing at the door.

"Why, in the house. It swarms with 'em. Just you stand still and listen outside my bedroom door in the middle of the night. I have, dozens of times; they're all over the place."

"Look here, Seaton," I said, "you asked me to come here, and I didn't mind chucking up a leave just to oblige you and because I'd promised; but don't get talking a lot of rot, that's all, or you'll know the difference when we get back."

"Don't fret," he said coldly, turning away. "I shan't be at school long. And what's more, you're here now, and there isn't anybody else to talk to. I'll chance the other."

"Look here, Seaton," I said, "you may think you're

going to scare me with a lot of stuff about voices and all that. But I'll just thank you to clear out; and you may please yourself about pottering about all night."

He made no answer; he was standing by the dressing-table looking across his candle into the looking-glass; he turned and stared slowly round the walls.

"Even this room's nothing more than a coffin. I suppose she told you—'It's all exactly the same as when my brother William died'—trust her for that! And good luck to him, say I. Look at that." He raised his candle close to the little water-colour I have mentioned. "There's hundreds of eyes like that in this house; and even if God does see you, He takes precious good care you don't see Him. And it's just the same with them. I tell you what, Withers, I'm getting sick of all this. I shan't stand it much longer."

The house was silent within and without, and even in the yellowish radiance of the candle a faint silver showed through the open window on my blind. I slipped off the bedclothes, wide awake, and sat irresolute on the bedside.

"I know you're only guying me," I said angrily, "but why is the house full of—what you say? Why do you hear—what you *do* hear? Tell me that, you silly fool!"

Seaton sat down on a chair and rested his candlestick on his knee. He blinked at me calmly. "She brings them," he said, with lifted eyebrows.

"Who? Your aunt?"

He nodded.

"How?"

"I told you," he answered pettishly. She's in league. You don't know. She as good as killed my mother; I know that. But it's not only her by a long chalk. She just sucks you dry. I know. And that's

what she'll do for me; because I'm like her—like my mother, I mean. She simply hates to see me alive. I wouldn't be like that old she-wolf for a million pounds. And so"—he broke off, with a comprehensive wave of his candlestick—"they're always here. Ah, my boy, wait till she's dead! She'll hear something then, I can tell you. It's all very well now, but wait till then! I wouldn't be in her shoes when she has to clear out—for something. Don't you go and believe I care for ghosts, or whatever you like to call them. We're all in the same box. We're all under her thumb."

He was looking almost nonchalantly at the ceiling at the moment, when I saw his face change, saw his eyes suddenly drop like shot birds and fix themselves on the cranny of the door he had just left ajar. Even from where I sat I could see his colour change; he went greenish. He crouched without stirring, simply fixed. And I, scarcely daring to breathe, sat with creeping skin, simply watching him. His hands relaxed, and he gave a kind of sigh.

"Was that one?" I whispered, with a timid show of jauntiness. He looked round, opened his mouth, and nodded. "What?" I said. He jerked his thumb with meaningful eyes, and I knew that he meant that his aunt had been there listening at our door cranny.

"Look here, Seaton," I said once more, wriggling to my feet. "You may think I'm a jolly noodle; just as you please. But your aunt has been civil to me and all that, and I don't believe a word you say about her, that's all, and never did. Every fellow's a bit off his pluck at night, and you may think it a fine sport to try your rubbish on me. I heard your aunt come upstairs before I fell asleep. And I'll bet you a level tanner she's in bed now. What's more, you can keep your blessed

ghosts to yourself. It's a guilty conscience, I should think."

Seaton looked at me curiously, without answering for a moment. "I'm not a liar, Withers; but I'm not going to quarrel either. You're the only chap I care a button for; or, at any rate, you're the only chap that's ever come here; and it's something to tell a fellow what you feel. I don't care a fig for fifty thousand ghosts, although I swear on my solemn oath that I know they're here. But she"—he turned deliberately—"you laid a tanner she's in bed, Withers; well, I know different. She's never in bed much of the night, and I'll prove it, too, just to show you I'm not such a nolly as you think I am. Come on!"

"Come on where?"

"Why, to see."

I hesitated. He opened a large cupboard and took out a small dark dressing-gown and a kind of shawl-jacket. He threw the jacket on the bed and put on the gown. His dusky face was colourless, and I could see by the way he fumbled at the sleeves he was shivering. But it was no good showing the white feather now. So I threw the tasselled shawl over my shoulders and, leaving our candle brightly burning on the chair, we went out together and stood in the corridor.

"Now then, listen!" Seaton whispered.

We stood leaning over the staircase. It was like leaning over a well, so still and chill the air was all around us. But presently, as I suppose happens in most old houses, began to echo and answer in my ears a medley of infinite small stirrings and whisperings. Now out of the distance an old timber would relax its fibres, or a scurry die away behind the perishing wainscot. But amid and behind such sounds as these I seemed to begin to be

conscious, as it were, of the lightest of footfalls, sounds as faint as the vanishing remembrance of voices in a dream. Seaton was all in obscurity except his face; out of that his eyes gleamed darkly, watching me.

"You'd hear, too, in time, my fine soldier," he muttered. "Come on!"

He descended the stairs, slipping his lean fingers lightly along the balusters. He turned to the right at the loop, and I followed him barefooted along a thickly-carpeted corridor. At the end stood a door ajar. And from here we very stealthily and in complete blackness ascended five narrow stairs. Seaton, with immense caution, slowly pushed open a door, and we stood together looking into a great pool of duskiness, out of which, lit by the feeble clearness of a night-light, rose a vast bed. A heap of clothes lay on the floor; beside them two slippers dozed, with noses each to each, two yards apart. Somewhere a little clock ticked huskily. There was a rather close smell of lavender and *eau de cologne*, mingled with the fragrance of ancient sachets, soap, and drugs. Yet it was a scent even more peculiarly commingled than that.

And the bed! I stared warily in; it was mounded gigantically, and it was empty.

Seaton turned a vague pale face, all shadows: "What did I say?" he muttered. "Who's—who's the fool now, I say? How are we going to get back without meeting her, I say? Answer me that! Oh, I wish to goodness you hadn't come here, Withers."

He stood visibly shivering in his skimpy gown, and could hardly speak for his teeth chattering. And very distinctly, in the hush that followed his whisper, I heard approaching a faint unhurried voluminous rustle. Seaton clutched my arm, dragged me to the right across the

room to a large cupboard, and drew the door close to on us. And, presently, as with bursting lungs I peeped out into the long, low, curtained bedroom, waddled in that wonderful great head and body. I can see her now, all patched and lined with shadow, her tied-up hair (she must have had enormous quantities of it for so old a woman), her heavy lids above those flat, slow, vigilant eyes. She just passed across my ken in the vague dusk; but the bed was out of sight.

We waited on and on, listening to the clock's muffled ticking. Not the ghost of a sound rose up from the great bed. Either she lay archly listening or slept a sleep serener than an infant's. And when, it seemed, we had been hours in hiding and were cramped, chilled, and half suffocated, we crept out on all fours, with terror knocking at our ribs, and so down the five narrow stairs and back to the little candle-lit blue-and-gold bedroom.

Once there, Seaton gave in. He sat livid on a chair with closed eyes.

"Here," I said, shaking his arm, "I'm going to bed; I've had enough of this foolery; I'm going to bed." His lips quivered, but he made no answer. I poured out some water into my basin, and with that cold pictured azure eye fixed on us, bespattered Seaton's sallow face and forehead and dabbled his hair. He presently sighed and opened fish-like eyes.

"Come on!" I said. "Don't get shamming, there's a good chap. Get on my back, if you like, and I'll carry you into your bedroom."

He waved me away and stood up. So, with my candle in one hand, I took him under the arm and walked him along according to his direction down the corridor. His was a much dingier room than mine, and littered with boxes, paper, cages, and clothes. I huddled him

into bed and turned to go. And suddenly, I can hardly explain it now, a kind of cold and deadly terror swept over me. I almost ran out of the room, with eyes fixed rigidly in front of me, blew out my candle, and buried my head under the bedclothes.

When I awoke, roused not by a gong, but by a long-continued tapping at my door, sunlight was raying in on cornice and bedpost, and birds were singing in the garden. I got up, ashamed of the night's folly, dressed quickly and went downstairs. The breakfast room was sweet with flowers and fruit and honey. Seaton's aunt was standing in the garden beside the open French window, feeding a great flutter of birds. I watched her for a moment, unseen. Her face was set in a deep reverie beneath the shadow of a big loose sun-hat. It was deeply lined, crooked, and, in a way I can't describe, fixedly vacant and strange. I coughed, and she turned at once with a prodigious smile to enquire how I had slept. And in that mysterious way by which we learn each other's secret thoughts without a sentence spoken I knew that she had followed every word and movement of the night before, and was triumphing over my affected innocence and ridiculing my friendly and too easy advances.

We returned to school, Seaton and I, lavishly laden, and by rail all the way. I made no reference to the obscure talk we had had, and resolutely refused to meet his eyes or to take up the hints he let fall. I was relieved—and yet I was sorry—to be going back, and strode on as fast as I could from the station, with Seaton almost trotting at my heels. But he insisted on buying more fruit and sweets—my share of which I accepted with a very bad grace. It was uncomfortably like a bribe; and, after all, I had no quarrel with his rum old aunt, and hadn't really believed half the stuff he had told me.

I saw as little of him as I could after that. He never referred to our visit or resumed his confidences, though in class I would sometimes catch his eye fixed on mine, full of a mute understanding, which I easily affected not to understand. He left Gummidge's, as I have said, rather abruptly, though I never heard of anything to his discredit. And I did not see him or have any news of him again till by chance we met one summer afternoon in the Strand.

He was dressed rather oddly in a coat too large for him and a bright silky tie. But we instantly recognized one another under the awning of a cheap jeweller's shop. He immediately attached himself to me and dragged me off, not too cheerfully, to lunch with him at an Italian restaurant near by. He chattered about our old school, which he remembered only with dislike and disgust; told me cold-bloodedly of the disastrous fate of one or two of the old fellows who had been among his chief tormentors; insisted on an expensive wine and the whole gamut of the foreign menu; and finally informed me, with a good deal of niggling, that he had come up to town to buy an engagement-ring.

And of course: "How is your aunt?" I enquired at last.

He seemed to have been awaiting the question. It fell like a stone into a deep pool, so many expressions flitted across his long un-English face.

"She's aged a good deal," he said softly, and broke off.

"She's been very decent," he continued presently and paused again. "In a way." He eyed me fleetingly. "I dare say you heard that—she—that is, that we—had lost a good deal of money."

"No," I said.

"Oh, yes!" said Seaton, and paused again.

And somehow, poor fellow, I knew in the clink and and clatter of glass and voices that he had lied to me; that he did not possess, and never had possessed, a penny beyond what his aunt had squandered on his too ample allowance of pocket-money.

"And the ghosts?" I enquired quizzically.

He grew instantly solemn, and, though it may have been my fancy, slightly yellowed. But "You are making game of me, Withers," was all he said.

He asked for my address, and I rather reluctantly gave him my card.

"Look here, Withers," he said, as we stood together in the sunlight on the kerb, saying good-bye, "here I am, and—and it's all very well. I'm not perhaps as fanciful as I was. But you are practically the only friend I have on earth—except Alice. . . . And there—to make a clean breast of it, I'm not sure that my aunt cares much about my getting married. She doesn't say so, of course. You know her well enough for that." He looked sidelong at the rattling gaudy traffic.

"What I was going to say is this: Would you mind coming down? You needn't stay the night unless you please, though, of course, you know you would be awfully welcome. But I should like you to meet my—to meet Alice; and then, perhaps, you might tell me your honest opinion of—of the other too."

I vaguely demurred. He pressed me. And we parted with a half promise that I would come. He waved his ball-topped cane at me and ran off in his long jacket after a 'bus.

A letter arrived soon after, in his small weak handwriting, giving me full particulars regarding route and trains. And without the least curiosity, even, perhaps

with some little annoyance that chance should have thrown us together again, I accepted his invitation and arrived one hazy midday at his out-of-the-way station to find him sitting on a low seat under a clump of double hollyhocks, awaiting me.

His face looked absent and singularly listless; but he seemed, none the less, pleased to see me.

We walked up the village street, past the little dingy apothecary's and the empty forge, and, as on my first visit, skirted the house together, and, instead of entering by the front door, made our way down the green path into the garden at the back. A pale haze of cloud muffled the sun; the garden lay in a grey shimmer—its old trees, its snap-dragoned faintly glittering walls. But now there was an air of slovenliness where before all had been neat and methodical. In a patch of shallowly-dug soil stood a worn-down spade leaning against a tree. There was an old broken wheelbarrow. The roses had run to leaf and briar; the fruit-trees were unpruned. The goddess of neglect brooded in secret.

"You ain't much of a gardener, Seaton," I said, with a sigh of ease.

"I think, do you know, I like it best like this," said Seaton. "We haven't any man now, of course. Can't afford it." He stood staring at his little dark square of freshly-turned earth. "And it always seems to me," he went on ruminatingly, "that, after all, we are nothing better than interlopers on the earth, disfiguring and staining wherever we go. I know it's shocking blasphemy to say so, but then it's different here, you see. We are farther away."

"To tell you the truth, Seaton, I *don't* quite see," I said; "but it isn't a new philosophy, is it? Anyhow, it's a precious beastly one."

"It's only what I think," he replied, with all his odd old stubborn meekness.

We wandered on together, talking little, and still with that expression of uneasy vigilance on Seaton's face. He pulled out his watch as we stood gazing idly over the green meadows and the dark motionless bulrushes.

"I think, perhaps, it's nearly time for lunch," he said. "Would you like to come in?"

We turned and walked slowly towards the house, across whose windows I confess my own eyes, too, —went restlessly wandering in search of its rather disconcerting inmate. There was a pathetic look of draggledness, of want of means and care, rust and overgrowth and faded paint. Seaton's aunt, a little to my relief, did not share our meal. Seaton carved the cold meat, and dispatched a heaped-up plate by an elderly servant for his aunt's private consumption. We talked little and in half-suppressed tones, and sipped a bottle of Madeira which Seaton had rather heedfully fetched out of the great mahogany sideboard.

I played him a dull and effortless game of chess, yawning between the moves he himself made almost at haphazard, and with attention elsewhere engaged. About five o'clock came the sound of a distant ring, and Seaton jumped up, overturning the board, and so ending a game that else might have fatuously continued to this day. He effusively excused himself, and after some little while returned with a slim, dark, rather sallow girl of about nineteen, in a white gown and hat, to whom I was presented with some little nervousness as his "dear old friend and schoolfellow."

We talked on in the pale afternoon light, still as it seemed to me, and even in spite of a real effort to be clear and gay, in a half-suppressed, lack-lustre fashion.

We all seemed, if it were not my fancy, to be expectant, to be rather anxiously awaiting an arrival, the appearance of someone who all but filled our collective consciousness. Seaton talked least of all, and in a restless interjectory way, as he continually fidgeted from chair to chair. At last he proposed a stroll in the garden before the sun should have quite gone down.

Alice walked between us. Her hair and eyes were conspicuously dark against the whiteness of her gown. She carried herself not ungracefully, and yet without the least movement of her arms and body, and answered us both without turning her head. There was a curious provocative reserve in that impassive and rather long face, a half-unconscious strength of character.

And yet somehow I knew—I believe we all knew—that this walk, this discussion of their future plans was a futility. I had nothing to base such a cynicism on, except only a vague sense of oppression, the foreboding remembrance of the inert invincible power in the background, to whom optimistic plans and love-making and youth are as chaff and thistledown. We came back, silent, in the last light. Seaton's aunt was there—under an old brass lamp. Her hair was as barbarously massed and curled as ever. Her eyelids, I think, hung even a little heavier in age over their slow-moving inscrutable pupils. We filed in softly out of the evening, and I made my bow.

"In this short interval, Mr. Withers," she remarked amiably, "you have put off youth, put on the man. Dear me, how sad it is to see the young days vanishing! Sit down. My nephew tells me you met by chance—or act of Providence, shall we call it?—and in my beloved Strand! You, I understand, are to be best man—yes, best man, or am I divulging secrets?" She surveyed

Arthur and Alice with overwhelming graciousness. They sat apart on two low chairs and smiled in return.

"And Arthur—how do you think Arthur is looking?"

"I think he looks very much in need of a change," I said deliberately.

"A change! Indeed?" She all but shut her eyes at me and with an exaggerated sentimentality shook her head. "My dear Mr. Withers! Are we not *all* in need of a change in this fleeting, fleeting world?" She mused over the remark like a connoisseur. "And you," she continued, turning abruptly to Alice, "I hope you pointed out to Mr. Withers all my pretty bits?"

"We walked round the garden," said Alice, looking out of the window. "It's a very beautiful evening."

"*Is* it?" said the old lady, starting up violently. "Then on this very beautiful evening we will go in to supper. Mr. Withers, your arm; Arthur, bring your bride."

I can scarcely describe with what curious ruminations I led the way into the faded, heavy-aired dining-room, with this indefinable old creature leaning weightily on my arm—the large flat bracelet on the yellow-laced wrist. She fumed a little, breathed rather heavily, as if with an effort of mind rather than of body; for she had grown much stouter and yet little more proportionate. And to talk into that great white face, so close to mine, was a queer experience in the dim light of the corridor, and even in the twinkling crystal of the candles. She was naïve—appallingly naïve; she was sudden and superficial; she was even arch; and all these in the brief, rather puffy passage from one room to the other, with these two tongue-tied children bringing up the rear. The meal was tremendous. I have never seen such a monstrous salad. But the dishes were greasy and over-spiced,

and were indifferently cooked. One thing only was quite unchanged—my hostess's appetite was as Gargantuan as ever. The old solid candelabra that lighted us stood before her high-backed chair. Seaton sat a little removed, with his plate almost in darkness.

And throughout this prodigious meal his aunt talked, mainly to me, mainly at Seaton, with an occasional satirical courtesy to Alice and muttered explosions of directions to the servant. She had aged, and yet, if it be not nonsense to say so, seemed no older. I suppose to the Pyramids a decade is but as the rustling down of a handful of dust. And she reminded me of some such unshakable prehistoricism. She certainly was an amazing talker—racy, extravagant, with a delivery that was perfectly overwhelming. As for Seaton—her flashes of silence were for him. On her enormous volubility would suddenly fall a hush: acid sarcasm would be left implied; and she would sit softly moving her great head, with eyes fixed full in a dreamy smile; but with her whole attention, one could see, slowly, joyously absorbing his mute discomfiture.

She confided in us her views on a theme vaguely occupying at the moment, I suppose, all our minds. "We have barbarous institutions, and so must put up, I suppose, with a never-ending procession of fools—of fools *ad infinitum*. Marriage, Mr. Withers, was instituted in the privacy of a garden; *sub rosa*, as it were. Civilization flaunts it in the glare of day. The dull marry the poor; the rich the effete; and so our New Jerusalem is peopled with naturals, plain and coloured, at either end. I detest folly; I detest still more (if I must be frank, dear Arthur) mere cleverness. Mankind has simply become a tailless host of uninstinctive animals. We should never have taken to

Evolution, Mr. Withers. 'Natural Selection!'—little gods and fishes!—the deaf for the dumb. We should have used our brains—intellectual pride, the ecclesiastics call it. And by brains I mean—what do I mean, Alice?—I mean, my dear child," and she laid two gross fingers on Alice's narrow sleeve, "I mean courage. Consider it, Arthur. I read that the scientific world is once more beginning to be afraid of spiritual agencies. Spiritual agencies that tap, and actually float, bless their hearts! I think just one more of those mulberries—thank you.

"They talk about 'blind Love,'" she ran inconsequently on as she helped herself, with eyes roving on the dish, "but why blind? I think, do you know, from weeping over its rickets. After all, it is we plain women that triumph, Mr. Withers, beyond the mockery of time. Alice, now! Fleeting, fleeting is youth, my child. What's that you were confiding to your plate, Arthur? Satirical boy. He laughs at his old aunt: nay, but thou didst laugh. He detests all sentiment. He whispers the most acid asides. Come, my love, we will leave these cynics; we will go and commiserate with each other on our sex. The choice of two evils, Mr. Smithers!" I opened the door, and she swept out as if borne on a torrent of unintelligible indignation; and Arthur and I were left in the clear four-flamed light alone.

For a while we sat in silence. He shook his head at my cigarette-case, and I lit a cigarette. Presently he fidgeted in his chair and poked his head forward into the light. He paused to rise and shut again the shut door.

"How long will you be?" he said, standing by the table.

I laughed.

"Oh, it's not that!" he said, in some confusion. "Of course, I like to be with her. But it's not that.

The truth is, Withers, I don't care about leaving her too long with my aunt."

I hesitated. He looked at me questioningly.

"Look here, Seaton," I said, "you know well enough that I don't want to interfere in your affairs, or to offer advice where it is not wanted. But don't you think perhaps you may not treat your aunt quite in the right way? As one gets old, you know, a little give and take. I have an old godmother, or something. She talks, too. . . . A little allowance: it does no harm. But hang it all, I'm no talker."

He sat down with his hands in his pockets and still with his eyes fixed almost incredulously on mine. "How?" he said.

"Well, my dear fellow, if I'm any judge—mind, I don't say that I am—but I can't help thinking she thinks you don't care for her; and perhaps takes your silence for—for bad temper. She has been very decent to you, hasn't she?"

"'Decent'? My God!" said Seaton.

I smoked on in silence; but he continued to look at me with that peculiar concentration I remembered of old.

"I don't think, perhaps, Withers," he began presently, "I don't think you quite understand. Perhaps you are not quite our kind. You always did, just like the other fellows, guy me at school. You laughed at me that night you came to stay here—about the voices and all that. But I don't mind being laughed at—because I know."

"Know what?" It was the same old system of dull question and evasive answer.

"I mean I know that what we see and hear is only the smallest fraction of what is. I know she lives quite out of this. She *talks* to you; but it's all make-believe.

It's all a 'parlour game.' She's not really with you; only pitting her outside wits against yours and enjoying the fooling. She's living on inside, on what you're rotten without. That's what it is—a cannibal feast. She's a spider. It doesn't much matter what you call it. It means the same kind of thing. I tell you, Withers, she hates me; and you can scarcely dream what that hatred means. I used to think I had an inkling of the reason. It's oceans deeper than that. It just lies behind: herself against myself. Why, after all, how much do we really understand of anything? We don't even know our own histories, and not a tenth, not a tenth of the reasons. What has life been to me?—nothing but a trap. And when one is set free, it only begins again. I thought you might understand; but you are on a different level: that's all."

"What on earth are you talking about?" I said contemptuously, in spite of myself.

"I mean what I say," he said gutturally. "All this outside's only make-believe—but there! what's the good of talking? So far as this is concerned I'm as good as done. You wait."

Seaton blew out three of the candles and, leaving the vacant room in semi-darkness, we groped our way along the corridor to the drawing-room. There a full moon stood shining in at the long garden windows. Alice sat stooping at the door, with her hands clasped, looking out, alone.

"Where is she?" Seaton asked in a low tone.

Alice looked up; their eyes met in a kind of instantaneous understanding, and the door immediately afterwards opened behind us.

"*Such* a moon!" said a voice that, once heard, remained unforgettably on the ear. "A night for lovers,

Mr. Withers, if ever there was one. Get a shawl, my dear Arthur, and take Alice for a little promenade. I dare say we old cronies will manage to keep awake. Hasten, hasten, Romeo! My poor, poor Alice, how laggard a lover!"

Seaton returned with a shawl. They drifted out into the moonlight. My companion gazed after them till they were out of hearing, turned to me gravely, and suddenly twisted her white face into such a convulsion of contemptuous amusement that I could only stare blankly in reply.

"Dear innocent children!" she said, with inimitable unctuousness. "Well, well, Mr. Withers, we poor seasoned old creatures must move with the times. Do you sing?"

I scouted the idea.

"Then you must listen to my playing. Chess"—she clasped her forehead with both cramped hands—"chess is now completely beyond my poor wits."

She sat down at the piano and ran her fingers in a flourish over the keys. "What shall it be? How shall we capture them, those passionate hearts? That first fine careless rapture? Poetry itself." She gazed softly into the garden a moment, and presently, with a shake of her body, began to play the opening bars of Beethoven's "Moonlight" Sonata. The piano was old and woolly. She played without music. The lamplight was rather dim. The moonbeams from the window lay across the keys. Her head was in shadow. And whether it was simply due to her personality or to some really occult skill in her playing I cannot say: I only know that she gravely and deliberately set herself to satirize the beautiful music. It brooded on the air, disillusioned, charged with mockery and bitterness. I stood at the

window; far down the path I could see the white figure glimmering in that pool of colourless light. A few faint stars shone, and still that amazing woman behind me dragged out of the unwilling keys her wonderful grotesquerie of youth and love and beauty. It came to an end. I knew the player was watching me. "Please, please, go on!" I murmured, without turning. "Please go on playing, Miss Seaton."

No answer was returned to my rather fluttering sarcasm, but I knew in some indefinite way that I was being acutely scrutinized, when suddenly there followed a procession of quiet, plaintive chords which broke at last softly into the hymn, *A Few More Years Shall Roll.*

I confess it held me spellbound. There is a wistful, strained, plangent pathos in the tune; but beneath those masterly old hands it cried softly and bitterly the solitude and desperate estrangement of the world. Arthur and his lady-love vanished from my thoughts. No one could put into a rather hackneyed old hymn-tune such an appeal who had never known the meaning of the words. Their meaning, anyhow, isn't commonplace.

I turned very cautiously and glanced at the musician. She was leaning forward a little over the keys, so that at the approach of my cautious glance she had but to turn her face into the thin flood of moonlight for every feature to become distinctly visible. And so, with the tune abruptly terminated, we steadfastly regarded one another, and she broke into a chuckle of laughter.

"Not quite so seasoned as I supposed, Mr. Withers. I see you are a real lover of music. To me it is too painful. It evokes too much thought. . . ."

I could scarcely see her little glittering eyes under their penthouse lids.

"And now," she broke off crisply, "tell me, as a man of the world, what do you think of my new niece?"

I was not a man of the world, nor was I much flattered in my stiff and dullish way of looking at things by being called one; and I could answer her without the least hesitation.

"I don't think, Miss Seaton, I'm much of a judge of character. She's very charming."

"A brunette?"

"I think I prefer dark women."

"And why? Consider, Mr. Withers; dark hair, dark eyes, dark cloud, dark night, dark vision, dark death, dark grave, dark DARK!"

Perhaps the climax would have rather thrilled Seaton, but I was too thick-skinned. "I don't know much about all that," I answered rather pompously. "Broad daylight's difficult enough for most of us."

"Ah," she said, with a sly inward burst of satirical laughter.

"And I suppose," I went on, perhaps a little nettled, "it isn't the actual darkness one admires, it's the contrast of the skin, and the colour of the eyes, and—their shining. Just as," I went blundering on, too late to turn back, "just as you only see the stars in the dark. It would be a long day without any evening. As for death and the grave, I don't suppose we shall much notice that." Arthur and his sweetheart were slowly returning along the dewy path. "I believe in making the best of things."

"How very interesting!" came the smooth answer. "I see you are a philosopher, Mr. Withers. H'm! 'As for death and the grave, I don't suppose we shall much notice that.' Very interesting. . . . And I'm sure," she added in a particularly suave voice, "I profoundly

hope so." She rose slowly from her stool. "You will take pity on me again, I hope. You and I would get on famously—kindred spirits—elective affinities. And, of course, now that my nephew's going to leave me, now that his affections are centred on another, I shall be a very lonely old woman. . . . Shall I not, Arthur?"

Seaton blinked stupidly. "I didn't hear what you said, Aunt."

"I was telling our old friend, Arthur, that when you are gone I shall be a very lonely old woman."

"Oh, I don't think so"; he said in a strange voice.

"He means, Mr. Withers, he means, my dear child," she said, sweeping her eyes over Alice, "he means that I shall have memory for company—heavenly memory—the ghosts of other days. Sentimental boy! And did you enjoy our music, Alice? Did I really stir that youthful heart? . . . O, O, O," continued the horrible old creature, "you billers and cooers, I have been listening to such flatteries, such confessions! Beware, beware, Arthur, there's many a slip." She rolled her little eyes at me, she shrugged her shoulders at Alice, and gazed an instant stonily into her nephew's face.

I held out my hand. "Good night, good night!" she cried. "He that fights and runs away. Ah, good night, Mr. Withers; come again soon!" She thrust out her cheek at Alice, and we all three filed slowly out of the room.

Black shadow darkened the porch and half the spreading sycamore. We walked without speaking up the dusty village street. Here and there a crimson window glowed. At the fork of the high-road I said good-bye. But I had taken hardly more than a dozen paces when a sudden impulse seized me.

"Seaton!" I called.

He turned in the moonlight.

"You have my address; if by any chance, you know, you should care to spend a week or two in town between this and the—the Day, we should be delighted to see you."

"Thank you, Withers, thank you," he said in a low voice.

"I dare say"—I waved my stick gallantly to Alice—"I dare say you will be doing some shopping; we could all meet," I added, laughing.

"Thank you, thank you, Withers—immensely," he repeated.

And so we parted.

But they were out of the jog-trot of my prosaic life. And being of a stolid and incurious nature, I left Seaton and his marriage, and even his aunt, to themselves in my memory, and scarcely gave a thought to them until one day I was walking up the Strand again, and passed the flashing gloaming of the covered-in jeweller's shop where I had accidentally encountered my old school-fellow in the summer. It was one of those still, close autumnal days after a rainy night. I cannot say why, but a vivid recollection returned to my mind of our meeting and of how suppressed Seaton had seemed, and of how vainly he had endeavoured to appear assured and eager. He must be married by now, and had doubtless returned from his honeymoon. And I had clean for-gotten my manners, had sent not a word of congratulation, nor—as I might very well have done, and as I knew he would have been immensely pleased at my doing—the ghost of a wedding-present.

On the other hand, I pleaded with myself, I had had no invitation. I paused at the corner of Trafalgar

Square, and at the bidding of one of those caprices that seize occasionally on even an unimaginative mind, I suddenly ran after a green 'bus that was passing, and found myself bound on a visit I had not in the least foreseen.

The colours of autumn were over the village when I arrived. A beautiful late afternoon sunlight bathed thatch and meadow. But it was close and hot. A child, two dogs, a very old woman with a heavy basket I encountered. One or two incurious tradesmen looked idly up as I passed by. It was all so rural and so still, my whimsical impulse had so much flagged, that for a while I hesitated to venture under the shadow of the sycamore-tree to enquire after the happy pair. I deliberately passed by the faint-blue gates and continued my walk under the high green and tufted wall. Hollyhocks had attained their topmost bud and seeded in the little cottage gardens beyond; the Michaelmas daisies were in flower; a sweet warm aromatic smell of fading leaves was in the air. Beyond the cottages lay a field where cattle were grazing, and beyond that I came to a little churchyard. Then the road wound on, pathless and houseless, among gorse and bracken. I turned impatiently and walked quickly back to the house and rang the bell.

The rather colourless elderly woman who answered my enquiry informed me that Miss Seaton was at home, as if only taciturnity forbade her adding, "But she doesn't want to see *you*."

"Might I, do you think, have Mr. Arthur's address?" I said.

She looked at me with quiet astonishment, as if waiting for an explanation. Not the faintest of smiles came into her thin face.

"I will tell Miss Seaton," she said after a pause. "Please walk in."

She showed me into the dingy undusted drawing-room, filled with evening sunshine and with the green-dyed light that penetrated the leaves overhanging the long French windows. I sat down and waited on and on, occasionally aware of a creaking footfall overhead. At last the door opened a little, and the great face I had once known peered round at me. For it was enormously changed; mainly, I think, because the old eyes had rather suddenly failed, and so a kind of stillness and darkness lay over its calm and wrinkled pallor.

"Who is it?" she asked.

I explained myself and told her the occasion of my visit.

She came in and shut the door carefully after her and, though the fumbling was scarcely perceptible, groped her way to a chair. She had on an old dressing-gown, like a cassock, of a patterned cinnamon colour.

"What is it you want?" she said, seating herself and lifting her blank face to mine.

"Might I just have Arthur's address?" I said deferentially. "I am so sorry to have disturbed you."

"H'm. You have come to see my nephew?"

"Not necessarily to see him, only to hear how he is, and, of course, Mrs. Seaton, too. I am afraid my silence must have appeared . . ."

"He hasn't noticed your silence," croaked the old voice out of the great mask; "besides, there isn't any Mrs. Seaton."

"Ah, then," I answered, after a momentary pause, "I have not seemed so black as I painted myself! And how is Miss Outram?"

"She's gone into Yorkshire," answered Seaton's aunt.

"And Arthur too?"

She did not reply, but simply sat blinking at me with lifted chin, as if listening, but certainly not for what I might have to say. I began to feel rather at a loss.

"You were no close friend of my nephew's, Mr. Smithers?" she said presently.

"No," I answered, welcoming the cue, "and yet, do you know, Miss Seaton, he is one of the very few of my old schoolfellows I have come across in the last few years, and I suppose as one gets older one begins to value old associations . . ." My voice seemed to trail off into a vacuum. "I thought Miss Outram," I hastily began again, "a particularly charming girl. I hope they are both quite well."

Still the old face solemnly blinked at me in silence.

"You must find it very lonely, Miss Seaton, with Arthur away?"

"I was never lonely in my life," she said sourly. "I don't look to flesh and blood for my company. When you've got to be my age, Mr. Smithers (which God forbid), you'll find life a very different affair from what you seem to think it is now. You won't seek company then, I'll be bound. It's thrust on you." Her face edged round into the clear green light, and her eyes groped, as it were, over my vacant, disconcerted face. "I dare say, now," she said, composing her mouth, "I dare say my nephew told you a good many tarradiddles in his time. Oh, yes, a good many, eh? He was always a liar. What, now, did he say of me? Tell me, now." She leant forward as far as she could, trembling, with an ingratiating smile.

"I think he is rather superstitious," I said coldly, "but, honestly, I have a very poor memory, Miss Seaton."

"Why?" she said. "*I* haven't."

"The engagement hasn't been broken off, I hope."

"Well, between you and me," she said, shrinking up and with an immensely confidential grimace, "it has."

"I'm sure I'm very sorry to hear it. And where is Arthur?"

"Eh?"

"Where is Arthur?"

We faced each other mutely among the dead old bygone furniture. Past all my scrutiny was that large, flat, grey, cryptic countenance. And then, suddenly, our eyes for the first time really met. In some indescribable way out of that thick-lidded obscurity a far small something stooped and looked out at me for a mere instant of time that seemed of almost intolerable protraction. Involuntarily I blinked and shook my head. She muttered something with great rapidity, but quite inarticulately; rose and hobbled to the door. I thought I heard, mingled in broken mutterings, something about tea.

"Please, please, don't trouble," I began, but could say no more, for the door was already shut between us. I stood and looked out on the long-neglected garden. I could just see the bright greenness of Seaton's old tadpole pond. I wandered about the room. Dusk began to gather, the last birds in that dense shadowiness of trees had ceased to sing. And not a sound was to be heard in the house. I waited on and on, vainly speculating. I even attempted to ring the bell; but the wire was broken, and only jangled loosely at my efforts.

I hesitated, unwilling to call or to venture out, and yet more unwilling to linger on, waiting for a tea that promised to be an exceedingly comfortless supper. And as darkness drew down, a feeling of the utmost unease and disquietude came over me. All my talks with Seaton

returned on me with a suddenly enriched meaning. I recalled again his face as we had stood hanging over the staircase, listening in the small hours to the inexplicable stirrings of the night. There were no candles in the room; every minute the autumnal darkness deepened. I cautiously opened the door and listened, and with some little dismay withdrew, for I was uncertain of my way out. I even tried the garden, but was confronted under a veritable thicket of foliage by a padlocked gate. It would be a little too ignominious to be caught scaling a friend's garden fence!

Cautiously returning into the still and musty drawing-room, I took out my watch, and gave the incredible old woman ten minutes in which to reappear. And when that tedious ten minutes had ticked by I could scarcely distinguish its hands. I determined to wait no longer, drew open the door, and, trusting to my sense of direction, groped my way through the corridor that I vaguely remembered led to the front of the house.

I mounted three or four stairs and, lifting a heavy curtain, found myself facing the starry fanlight of the porch. From here I glanced into the gloom of the dining-room. My fingers were on the latch of the outer door when I heard a faint stirring in the darkness above the hall. I looked up and became conscious of, rather than saw, the huddled old figure looking down on me.

There was an immense hushed pause. Then, "Arthur, Arthur," whispered an inexpressibly peevish rasping voice, "is that you? Is that you, Arthur?"

I can scarcely say why, but the question horribly startled me. No conceivable answer occurred to me. With head craned back, hand clenched on my umbrella, I continued to stare up into the gloom, in this fatuous confrontation.

"Oh, oh"; the voice croaked. "It is you, is it? *That* disgusting man! . . . Go away out. Go away out."

Hesitating no longer, I caught open the door and, slamming it behind me, ran out into the garden, under the gigantic old sycamore, and so out at the open gate.

I found myself half up the village street before I stopped running. The local butcher was sitting in his shop reading a piece of newspaper by the light of a small oil-lamp. I crossed the road and enquired the way to the station. And after he had with minute and needless care directed me, I asked casually if Mr. Arthur Seaton still lived with his aunt at the big house just beyond the village. He poked his head in at the little parlour door.

"Here's a gentleman enquiring after young Mr. Seaton, Millie," he said. "He's dead, ain't he?"

"Why, yes, bless you," replied a cheerful voice from within. "Dead and buried these three months or more —young Mr. Seaton. And just before he was to be married, don't you remember, Bob?"

I saw a fair young woman's face peer over the muslin of the little door at me.

"Thank you," I replied, "then I go straight on?"

"That's it, sir; past the pond, bear up the hill a bit to the left, and then there's the station lights before your eyes."

We looked intelligently into each other's faces in the beam of the smoky lamp. But not one of the many questions in my mind could I put into words.

And again I paused irresolutely a few paces further on. It was not, I fancy, merely a foolish apprehension of what the raw-boned butcher might "think" that prevented my going back to see if I could find Seaton's grave in the benighted churchyard. There was precious little use in

pottering about in the muddy dark merely to discover where he was buried. And yet I felt a little uneasy. My rather horrible thought was that, so far as I was concerned—one of his extremely few friends—he had never been much better than "buried" in my mind.

—*Walter de la Mare*

From "The Riddle and Other Stories"
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THE BOGEY OF SPACE

When Lafcadio Hearn comes to the end of *The Romance of the Milky Way*, he tells us, a little wistfully, that the lovely old Japanese legend, which makes the heavens "seem very near and warm and human," has sometimes enabled him "to forget the monstrous facts of science, and the stupendous horror of Space." And elsewhere, he writes of the terror that he felt, in common with his philosophic guide, Herbert Spencer, at the notion of infinite Space—"the mere vague idea of that everlasting Night into which the blazing of millions of suns can bring neither light nor warmth." Most of us, I think, have been kept from sleep, at some time or other, by similar emotions. "Of the Kosmos in the last resort," wrote Stevenson, "science reports many doubtful things and all of them appalling." From time to time, astronomers, thinking of nothing but their strange study, have brought us news of the macrocosm, bewildering measurements, and ghastly phenomena, the full import of which, suddenly realized in a quiet hour, has left us sick at heart. From these monstrous data our imagination has dizzily fashioned a vision of the universe compared with which the hells of the theologians seemed lively and companionable.

At such times all existence begins to look like an unending nightmare. We see the bright unnumbered throng of stars as so many specks of dust on the dark mantle of old Chaos, most ancient of devils. And even they appear remote and unfriendly. The fixed stars

know nothing of us: the old homely constellations have an alien look. In the scarred white face of the moon we can read the destiny of our own beautiful planet, soon to be a cold cinder. Good and evil alike are as nothing in the face of the illimitable darkness that awaits us. Our most heroic endeavour cannot lighten the gloom. The greatest of our prophets and poets cannot break the silence for long; it has swallowed the shouts and songs of countless generations. Man, with all his pleasant green places, is only the tiniest accident, a slight tremor of a wheel, something that the next stroke of the machine will put to rights, obliterating him and all his works. But these shuddering negations, to which we have been led by a few scientific data, do not disturb us long. A few hours' sleep or a brisk walk destroys the whole mournful fabric, and we step out lively as before. A few misguided men, having much to do with these things, make some sort of a creed of such folly, and angrily deny that man has an immortal soul. In this they are wise according to their lights, for believing themselves to be caged in such a universe their only hope lies in a speedy extinction. The soul has no better place in their dreary cosmos than a skylark would have in a Birmingham factory.

Blake was once at a friend's house when the talk turned on the vastness of Space. At last Blake, who was always irritated by this sort of talk, broke in with, "It is false. I walked the other evening to the end of the heath and touched the sky with my finger." Those who are familiar with Blake's habit of mind, his way of using daring figures of speech as if they were literal statements of fact, will not dismiss this remark as the raving of a genial madman. To Blake, the artist, this perpetual

raising of scientific bogeys, this emphasizing of the emptiness of the universe, to the distress of our imagination, was nothing short of criminal. He believed in the "determinate and bounding form" of all things, in "the bounding line and its infinite inflections and movements." "Leave out this line," he wrote, "and you leave out life itself; all is chaos again. . . ." And chaos is the arch-enemy of the artist, who strives to fashion from the corrupt materials at hand the enduring forms of his imagination. To Blake the sky appeared a most excellent canopy, a majestical roof fretted with golden fire, as it did to Hamlet or any other man. So, too, our earth appears a lovely, fruitful dwelling-place. But, according to science, one is a nightmare of space, the other a putrescent cinder. This may be the truth for science, in which there are no nightmares, but it is not the truth for us. Science, with all its data and phenomena, appeals only to one small part of a man, but the ultimate truth must appeal to the whole man, to the emotional, reasoning, moral, imaginative creature with an immortal soul. It is poetry, in the widest sense of the term, that makes this appeal, and poetry alone. The sky and the earth that we find in poetry and that we have seen for ourselves, the blue canopy stretched over the beautiful dwelling-place, are nearer the ultimate truth than anything that science can tell us.

When we go to science for an account of the cosmos and recoil in horror from the nightmarish thing that we find there, it does not mean that science is necessarily wrong (though, for the most part, it is only guessing), but that we have gone to it for something that it cannot give, and does not pretend to give—an ultimate truth that will satisfy every demand of our highly complex nature.

We cannot take science out of its own limited sphere of activity without being horror-struck at the result. Thus, if we went to science, in one or other of its various branches, for a minute description of a red rose, a glass of wine, a wonderful sunset, or a lovely child, the result, in every instance, would seem to be an outlandish thing of horror. So it is with the universe; when we can apprehend it as we can a rose or a sunset, not through science but through the poetry that saturates our being, we shall see the universe in all its majesty and splendour, with all its blazing multi-coloured suns, strange planets and wild moons, moving in the endless dance.

Men like Hearn suffered because they would not keep science within its natural limits. They allowed the bogey talk of the astronomers to frighten them. Hearn never seemed to see that the old Japanese legend which made the heavens seem very near and warm and human was probably nearer the ultimate truth of things than the monstrous facts that he was always trying to forget. He needed large doses of Blake as an antidote to Herbert Spencer. As for the notion of infinite space and "that everlasting night," of which the astronomical dabblers have made so much, it is nothing but a bleak fiction. For my part, I have ceased to be troubled by any horror of that space in which star-systems move like specks of dust, for I have long held that the whole affair is in reality an illusion, an elaborate jest of the gods. Even the scientists are less confident than they were, for the new Einstein theory (which mathematical friends have vainly tried to explain to me) seems to emphasize the illusory aspect of space, making our old theories and elaborate calculations look rather foolish. Meanwhile, the cosmos now appears to be more of a joke than ever,

but whatever conclusions the scientists may arrive at, of one thing I am certain—it is a good joke. Probably it is the ultimate, universal, everlasting joke, of which the greatest of our jests are but distorted reflections and fleeting shadows.

—J. B. Priestley

From "Papers from Lilliput"
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THE TRAIN TO MARIPOSA

It leaves the city every day about five o'clock in the evening, the train for Mariposa.

Strange that you did not know of it, though you come from the little town—or did, long years ago.

Odd that you never knew, in all these years, that the train was there every afternoon, puffing up steam in the city station, and that you might have boarded it any day and gone home. No, not "home,"—of course you couldn't call it "home" now; "home" means that big red sandstone house of yours in the costlier part of the city. "Home" means, in a way, this Mausoleum Club where you sometimes talk with me of the times that you had as a boy in Mariposa.

But of course "home" would hardly be the word you would apply to the little town, unless perhaps, late at night, when you'd been sitting reading in a quiet corner somewhere such a book as the present one.

Naturally you don't know of the Mariposa train now. Years ago, when you first came to the city as a boy with your way to make, you knew of it well enough, only too well. The price of a ticket counted in those days, and though you knew of the train you couldn't take it, but sometimes from sheer homesickness you used to wander down to the station on a Friday afternoon after your work, and watch the Mariposa people getting on the train and wish that you could go.

Why, you knew that train at one time better, I suppose, than any other single thing in the city, and loved it too for the little town in the sunshine that it ran to.

Do you remember how when you first began to make money you used to plan that just as soon as you were rich, really rich, you'd go back home again to the little town and build a great big house with a fine verandah,—no stint about it, the best that money could buy, planed lumber, every square foot of it, and a fine picket fence in front of it.

It was to be one of the grandest and finest houses that thought could conceive; much finer, in true reality, than that vast palace of sandstone with the porte cochère and the sweeping conservatories that you afterwards built in the costlier part of the city.

But if you have half forgotten Mariposa, and long since lost the way to it, you are only like the greater part of the men here in this Mausoleum Club in the city. Would you believe it that practically every one of them came from Mariposa once upon a time, and that there isn't one of them that doesn't sometimes dream in the dull quiet of the long evening here in the club, that some day he will go back and see the place.

They all do. Only they're half ashamed to own it.

Ask your neighbour there at the next table whether the partridge that they sometimes serve to you here can be compared for a moment to the birds that he and you, or he and some one else, used to shoot as boys in the spruce thickets along the lake. Ask him if he ever tasted duck that could for a moment be compared to the black ducks in the rice marsh along the Ossawippi. And as for fish, and fishing,—no, don't ask him about that, for if he ever starts telling you of the chub they used to catch below the mill dam and the green bass that used to lie in the water-shadow of the rocks beside the Indian's Island, not even the long dull evening in this club would be long enough for the telling of it.

But no wonder they don't know about the five-o'clock train for Mariposa. Very few people know about it. Hundreds of them know that there is a train that goes out at five o'clock, but they mistake it. Ever so many of them think it's just a suburban train. Lots of people that take it every day think it's only the train to the golf grounds, but the joke is that after it passes out of the city and the suburbs and the golf grounds, it turns itself little by little into the Mariposa train thundering and pounding towards the north with hemlock sparks pouring out into the darkness from the funnel of it.

Of course you can't tell it just at first. All those people that are crowding into it with golf clubs, and wearing knickerbockers and flat caps, would deceive anybody. That crowd of suburban people going home on commutation tickets and sometimes standing thick in the aisles, those are, of course, not Mariposa people. But look round a little bit and you'll find them easily enough. Here and there in the crowd those people with the clothes that are perfectly all right and yet look odd in some way, the women with the peculiar hats and the—what do you say?—last year's fashions? Ah yes, of course, that must be it.

Anyway, those are the Mariposa people all right enough. That man with the two-dollar panama and the glaring spectacles is one of the greatest judges that ever adorned the bench of Missinaba County. That clerical gentleman with the wide black hat, who is explaining to the man with him the marvellous mechanism of the new air brake (one of the most conspicuous illustrations of the divine structure of the physical universe), surely you have seen him before! Mariposa people! Oh yes, there are any number of them on the train every day.

But of course you hardly recognize them while the

train is still passing through the suburbs and the golf district and the outlying parts of the city area. But wait a little, and you will see that when the city is well behind you, bit by bit the train changes its character. The electric locomotive that took you through the city tunnels is off now and the old wood engine is hitched on in its place. I suppose, very probably, you haven't seen one of these wood engines since you were a boy forty years ago,—the old engine with a wide top like a hat on its funnel, and with sparks enough to light up a suit for damages once in every mile.

Do you see, too, that the trim little cars that came out of the city on the electric suburban express are being discarded now at the way stations, one by one, and in their place is the old familiar car with the stuff cushions in red plush (how gorgeous it once seemed!) and with a box stove set up in one end of it? The stove is burning furiously at its sticks this autumn evening, for the air sets in chill as you get clear away from the city and are rising up to the higher ground of the country of the pines and the lakes.

Look from the window as you go. The city is far behind now and right and left of you there are trim farms with elms and maples near them and with tall windmills beside the barns that you can still see in the gathering dusk. There is a dull red light from the windows of the farmstead. It must be comfortable there after the roar and clatter of the city, and only think of the still quiet of it.

As you sit back half dreaming in the car, you keep wondering why it is that you never came up before in all these years. Ever so many times you planned that just as soon as the rush and strain of business eased up a little, you would take the train and go back to the little town

to see what it was like now, and if things had changed much since your day. But each time when your holidays came, somehow you changed your mind and went down to Naragansett or Nagahucksett or Nagasomething, and left over the visit to Mariposa for another time.

It is almost night now. You can still see the trees and the fences and the farmsteads, but they are fading fast in the twilight. They have lengthened out the train by this time with a string of flat cars and freight cars between where we are sitting and the engine. But at every cross-way we can hear the long muffled roar of the whistle, dying to a melancholy wail that echoes into the woods; the woods, I say, for the farms are thinning out and the track plunges here and there into great stretches of bush, —tall tamarack and red scrub willow and with a tangled undergrowth of brush that has defied for two generations all attempts to clear it into the form of fields.

Why, look, that great space that seems to open out in the half-dark of the falling evening,—why, surely yes,—Lake Ossawippi, the big lake, as they used to call it, from which the river runs down to the smaller lake,—Lake Wissanotti,—where the town of Mariposa has lain waiting for you there for thirty years.

This is Lake Ossawippi surely enough. You would know it anywhere by the broad, still, black water with hardly a ripple, and with the grip of the coming frost already on it. Such a great sheet of blackness it looks as the train thunders along the side, swinging the curve of the embankment at a breakneck speed as it rounds the corner of the lake.

How fast the train goes this autumn night! You have travelled, I know you have, in the Empire State Express, and the New Limited and the Maritime Express that holds the record of six hundred whirling miles from Paris

to Marseilles. But what are they to this, this mad career, this breakneck speed, this thundering roar of the Mariposa local driving hard to its home! Don't tell me that the speed is only twenty-five miles an hour. I don't care what it is. I tell you, and you can prove it for yourself if you will, that that train of mingled flat cars and coaches that goes tearing into the night, its engine whistle shrieking out its warning into the silent woods and echoing over the dull still lake, is the fastest train in the whole world.

Yes, and the best too,—the most comfortable, the most reliable, the most luxurious and the speediest train that ever turned a wheel.

And the most genial, the most sociable too. See how the passengers all turn and talk to one another now as they get nearer and nearer to the little town. That dull reserve that seemed to hold the passengers in the electric suburban has clean vanished and gone. They are talking,—listen,—of the harvest, and the late election, and of how the local member is mentioned for the cabinet and all the old familiar topics of the sort. Already the conductor has changed his glazed hat for an ordinary round Christie and you can hear the passengers calling him and the brakesman "Bill" and "Sam" as if they were all one family.

What is it now—nine-thirty? Ah, then we must be nearing the town,—this big bush that we are passing through, you remember it surely as the great swamp just this side of the bridge over the Ossawippi? There is the bridge itself, and the long roar of the train as it rushes sounding over the trestle work that rises above the marsh. Hear the clatter as we pass the semaphores and the switch lights! We must be close in now!

What? it feels nervous and strange to be coming here

again after all these years? It must indeed. No, don't bother to look at the reflection of your face in the window-pane shadowed by the night outside. Nobody could tell you now after all these years. Your face has changed in these long years of money-getting in the city. Perhaps if you had come back now and again, just at odd times, it wouldn't have been so.

There,—you hear it?—the long whistle of the locomotive, one, two, three! You feel the sharp slackening of the train as it swings round the curve of the last embankment that brings it to the Mariposa station. See, too, as we round the curve, the row of the flashing lights, the bright windows of the depot.

How vivid and plain it all is. Just as it used to be thirty years ago. There is the string of the hotel 'buses, drawn up all ready for the train, and as the train rounds in and stops hissing and panting at the platform, you can hear above all other sounds the cry of the brakesmen and the porters:

"MARIPOSA! MARIPOSA!"

. . . . . .

And as we listen, the cry grows fainter and fainter in our ears and we are sitting here again in the leather chairs of the Mausoleum Club, talking of the little Town in the Sunshine that once we knew.

—*Stephen Leacock*

From "Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town"
By permission of the Author and John Lane, The Bodley Head, London

THE THREE STRANGERS

Among the few features of agricultural England which retain an appearance but little modified by the lapse of centuries, may be reckoned the high, grassy and furzy downs, coombs, or ewe-leases, as they are indifferently called, that fill a large area of certain counties in the south and south-west. If any mark of human occupation is met with hereon, it usually takes the form of the solitary cottage of some shepherd.

Fifty years ago such a lonely cottage stood on such a down, and may possibly be standing there now. In spite of its loneliness, however, the spot, by actual measurement, was not more than five miles from a county-town. Yet that affected it little. Five miles of irregular upland, during the long inimical seasons, with their sleets, snows, rains, and mists, afford withdrawing space enough to isolate a Timon or a Nebuchadnezzar; much less, in fair weather, to please that less repellent tribe, the poets, philosophers, artists, and others who "conceive and meditate of pleasant things."

Some old earthen camp or barrow, some clump of trees, at least some starved fragment of ancient hedge is usually taken advantage of in the erection of these forlorn dwellings. But, in the present case, such a kind of shelter had been disregarded. Higher Crowstairs, as the house was called, stood quite detached and undefended. The only reason for its precise situation seemed to be the crossing of two footpaths at right angles hard by, which may have crossed there and thus for a good five hundred years. Hence the house was

exposed to the elements on all sides. But, though the wind up here blew unmistakably when it did blow, and the rain hit hard whenever it fell, the various weathers of the winter season were not quite so formidable on the coomb as they were imagined to be by dwellers on low ground. The raw rimes were not so pernicious as in the hollows, and the frosts were scarcely so severe. When the shepherd and his family who tenanted the house were pitied for their sufferings from the exposure, they said that upon the whole they were less inconvenienced by "wuzzes and flames" (hoarses and phlegms) than when they had lived by the stream of a snug neighbouring valley.

The night of March 28, 182–, was precisely one of the nights that were wont to call forth these expressions of commiseration. The level rainstorm smote walls, slopes, and hedges like the clothyard shafts of Senlac and Crecy. Such sheep and outdoor animals as had no shelter stood with their buttocks to the winds; while the tails of little birds trying to roost on some scraggy thorn were blown inside-out like umbrellas. The gable-end of the cottage was stained with wet, and the eavesdroppings flapped against the wall. Yet never was commiseration for the shepherd more misplaced. For that cheerful rustic was entertaining a large party in glorification of the christening of his second girl.

The guests had arrived before the rain began to fall, and they were all now assembled in the chief or living room of the dwelling. A glance into the apartment at eight o'clock on this eventful evening would have resulted in the opinion that it was as cosy and comfortable a nook as could be wished for in boisterous weather. The calling of its inhabitant was proclaimed by a number of highly-polished sheep-crooks without stems that were

hung ornamentally over the fireplace, the curl of each shining crook varying from the antiquated type engraved in the patriarchal pictures of old family Bibles to the most approved fashion of the last local sheep-fair. The room was lighted by half-a-dozen candles, having wicks only a trifle smaller than the grease which enveloped them, in candlesticks that were never used but at high-days, holy-days, and family feasts. The lights were scattered about the room, two of them standing on the chimney-piece. This position of candles was in itself significant. Candles on the chimney-piece always meant a party.

On the hearth, in front of a back-brand to give substance, blazed a fire of thorns, that crackled "like the laughter of the fool."

Nineteen persons were gathered here. Of these, five women, wearing gowns of various bright hues, sat in chairs along the wall; girls shy and not shy filled the window-bench; four men, including Charley Jake the hedge-carpenter, Elijah New the parish-clerk, and John Pitcher, a neighbouring dairyman, the shepherd's father-in-law, lolled in the settle; a young man and maid, who were blushing over tentative *pourparlers* on a life-companionship, sat beneath the corner-cupboard; and an elderly engaged man of fifty or upward moved restlessly about from spots where his betrothed was not to the spot where she was. Enjoyment was pretty general, and so much the more prevailed in being unhampered by conventional restrictions. Absolute confidence in each other's good opinion begat perfect ease, while the finishing stroke of manner, amounting to a truly princely serenity, was lent to the majority by the absence of any expression or trait denoting that they wished to get on in the world, enlarge their minds, or do any eclipsing thing whatever—which

nowadays so generally nips the bloom and *bonhomie* of all except the two extremes of the social scale.

Shepherd Fennel had married well, his wife being a dairyman's daughter from a vale at a distance, who brought fifty guineas in her pocket—and kept them there, till they should be required for ministering to the needs of a coming family. This frugal woman had been somewhat exercised as to the character that should be given to the gathering. A sit-still party had its advantages; but an undisturbed position of ease in chairs and settles was apt to lead on the men to such an unconscionable deal of toping that they would sometimes fairly drink the house dry. A dancing-party was the alternative; but this, while avoiding the foregoing objection on the score of good drink, had a counterbalancing disadvantage in the matter of good victuals, the ravenous appetites engendered by the exercise causing immense havoc in the buttery. Shepherdess Fennel fell back upon the intermediate plan of mingling short dances with short periods of talk and singing, so as to hinder any ungovernable rage in either. But this scheme was entirely confined to her own gentle mind: the shepherd himself was in the mood to exhibit the most reckless phases of hospitality.

The fiddler was a boy of those parts, about twelve years of age, who had a wonderful dexterity in jigs and reels, though his fingers were so small and short as to necessitate a constant shifting for the high notes, from which he scrambled back to the first position with sounds not of unmixed purity of tone. At seven the shrill tweedle-dee of this youngster had begun, accompanied by a booming ground-bass from Elijah New, the parish-clerk, who had thoughtfully brought with him his favourite musical instrument, the serpent. Dancing was instantaneous, Mrs. Fennel privately enjoining the

players on no account to let the dance exceed the length of a quarter of an hour.

But Elijah and the boy, in the excitement of their position, quite forgot the injunction. Moreover, Oliver Giles, a man of seventeen, one of the dancers, who was enamoured of his partner, a fair girl of thirty-three rolling years, had recklessly handed a new crown-piece to the musicians, as a bribe to keep going as long as they had muscle and wind. Mrs. Fennel, seeing the steam begin to generate on the countenances of her guests, crossed over and touched the fiddler's elbow and put her hand on the serpent's mouth. But they took no notice, and fearing she might lose her character of genial hostess if she were to interfere too markedly, she retired and sat down helpless. And so the dance whizzed on with cumulative fury, the performers moving in their planet-like courses, direct and retrograde, from apogee to perigee, till the hand of the well-kicked clock at the bottom of the room had travelled over the circumference of an hour.

While these cheerful events were in course of enactment within Fennel's pastoral dwelling, an incident having considerable bearing on the party had occurred in the gloomy night without. Mrs. Fennel's concern about the growing fierceness of the dance corresponded in point of time with the ascent of a human figure to the solitary hill of Higher Crowstairs from the direction of the distant town. This personage strode on through the rain without a pause, following the little-worn path which, further on in its course, skirted the shepherd's cottage.

It was nearly the time of full moon, and on this account, though the sky was lined with a uniform sheet of dripping cloud, ordinary objects out of doors were readily visible. The sad wan light revealed the lonely

pedestrian to be a man of supple frame; his gait suggested that he had somewhat passed the period of perfect and instinctive agility, though not so far as to be otherwise than rapid of motion when occasion required. At a rough guess, he might have been about forty years of age. He appeared tall, but a recruiting sergeant, or other person accustomed to the judging of men's heights by the eye, would have discerned that this was chiefly owing to his gauntness, and that he was not more than five-feet-eight or nine.

Notwithstanding the regularity of his tread, there was caution in it, as in that of one who mentally feels his way; and despite the fact that it was not a black coat nor a dark garment of any sort that he wore, there was something about him which suggested that he naturally belonged to the black-coated tribes of men. His clothes were of fustian, and his boots hobnailed, yet in his progress he showed not the mud-accustomed bearing of hobnailed and fustianed peasantry.

By the time that he had arrived abreast of the shepherd's premises the rain came down, or rather came along, with yet more determined violence. The outskirts of the little settlement partially broke the force of wind and rain, and this induced him to stand still. The most salient of the shepherd's domestic erections was an empty sty at the forward corner of his hedgeless garden, for in these latitudes the principle of masking the homelier features of your establishment by a conventional frontage was unknown. The traveller's eye was attracted to this small building by the pallid shine of the wet slates that covered it. He turned aside, and, finding it empty, stood under the pent-roof for shelter.

While he stood, the boom of the serpent within the adjacent house, and the lesser strains of the fiddler,

reached the spot as an accompaniment to the surging hiss of the flying rain on the sod, its louder beating on the cabbage-leaves of the garden, on the eight or ten bee-hives just discernible by the path, and its dripping from the eaves into a row of buckets and pans that had been placed under the walls of the cottage. For at Higher Crowstairs, as at all such elevated domiciles, the grand difficulty of housekeeping was an insufficiency of water; and a casual rainfall was utilized by turning out, as catchers, every utensil that the house contained. Some queer stories might be told of the contrivances for economy in suds and dish-waters that are absolutely necessitated in upland habitations during the droughts of summer. But at this season there were no such exigencies; a mere acceptance of what the skies bestowed was sufficient for an abundant store.

At last the notes of the serpent ceased and the house was silent. This cessation of activity aroused the solitary pedestrian from the reverie into which he had lapsed, and, emerging from the shed, with an apparently new intention, he walked up the path to the house-door. Arrived here, his first act was to kneel down on a large stone beside the row of vessels, and to drink a copious draught from one of them. Having quenched his thirst he rose and lifted his hand to knock, but paused with his eye upon the panel. Since the dark surface of the wood revealed absolutely nothing, it was evident that he must be mentally looking through the door, as if he wished to measure thereby all the possibilities that a house of this sort might include, and how they might bear upon the question of his entry.

In his indecision he turned and surveyed the scene around. Not a soul was anywhere visible. The garden-path stretched downward from his feet, gleaming like

the track of a snail; the roof of the little well (mostly dry), the well-cover, the top rail of the garden-gate, were varnished with the same dull liquid glaze; while, far away in the vale, a faint whiteness of more than usual extent showed that the rivers were high in the meads. Beyond all this winked a few bleared lamplights through the beating drops—lights that denoted the situation of the county-town from which he had appeared to come. The absence of all notes of life in that direction seemed to clinch his intentions, and he knocked at the door.

Within, a desultory chat had taken the place of movement and musical sound. The hedge-carpenter was suggesting a song to the company, which nobody just then was inclined to undertake, so that the knock afforded a not unwelcome diversion.

"Walk in!" said the shepherd promptly.

The latch clicked upward, and out of the night our pedestrian appeared upon the door-mat. The shepherd arose, snuffed two of the nearest candles, and turned to look at him.

Their light disclosed that the stranger was dark in complexion and not unprepossessing as to feature. His hat, which for a moment he did not remove, hung low over his eyes, without concealing that they were large, open, and determined, moving with a flash rather than a glance round the room. He seemed pleased with his survey, and, baring his shaggy head, said, in a rich, deep voice, "The rain is so heavy, friends, that I ask leave to come in and rest awhile."

"To be sure, stranger," said the shepherd. "And faith, you've been lucky in choosing your time, for we are having a bit of a fling for a glad cause—though, to be sure, a man could hardly wish that glad cause to happen more than once a year."

"Nor less," spoke up a woman. "For 'tis best to get your family over and done with, as soon as you can, so as to be all the earlier out of the fag o't."

"And what may be this glad cause?" asked the stranger.

"A birth and christening," said the shepherd.

The stranger hoped his host might not be made unhappy either by too many or too few of such episodes, and being invited by a gesture to a pull at the mug, he readily acquiesced. His manner, which, before entering, had been so dubious, was now altogether that of a careless and candid man.

"Late to be traipsing athwart this coomb—hey?" said the engaged man of fifty.

"Late it is, master, as you say.—I'll take a seat in the chimney-corner, if you have nothing to urge against it, ma'am; for I am a little moist on the side that was next the rain."

Mrs. Shepherd Fennel assented, and made room for the self-invited comer, who, having got completely inside the chimney-corner, stretched out his legs and his arms with the expansiveness of a person quite at home.

"Yes, I am rather cracked in the vamp," he said freely, seeing that the eyes of the shepherd's wife fell upon his boots, "and I am not well fitted either. I have had some rough times lately, and have been forced to pick up what I can get in the way of wearing, but I must find a suit better fit for working-days when I reach home."

"One of hereabouts?" she inquired.

"Not quite that—further up the country."

"I thought so. And so be I; and by your tongue you come from my neighbourhood."

"But you would hardly have heard of me," he said quickly. "My time would be long before yours, ma'am, you see."

This testimony to the youthfulness of his hostess had the effect of stopping her cross-examination.

"There is only one thing more wanted to make me happy," continued the new-comer. "And that is a little baccy, which I am sorry to say I am out of."

"I'll fill your pipe," said the shepherd.

"I must ask you to lend me a pipe likewise."

"A smoker, and no pipe about 'ee?"

"I have dropped it somewhere on the road."

The shepherd filled and handed him a new clay pipe, saying, as he did so, "Hand me your baccy-box—I'll fill that too, now I am about it."

The man went through the movement of searching his pockets.

"Lost that too?" said his entertainer, with some surprise.

"I am afraid so," said the man with some confusion.

"Give it to me in a screw of paper." Lighting his pipe at the candle with a suction that drew the whole flame into the bowl, he resettled himself in the corner and bent his looks upon the faint steam from his damp legs, as if he wished to say no more.

Meanwhile the general body of guests had been taking little notice of this visitor by reason of an absorbing discussion in which they were engaged with the band about a tune for the next dance. The matter being settled, they were about to stand up when an interruption came in the shape of another knock at the door.

At sound of the same the man in the chimney-corner took up the poker and began stirring the brands as if doing it thoroughly were the one aim of his exis-

tence; and a second time the shepherd said, "Walk in!" In a moment another man stood upon the straw-woven door-mat. He too was a stranger.

This individual was one of a type radically different from the first. There was more of the commonplace in his manner, and a certain jovial cosmopolitanism sat upon his features. He was several years older than the first arrival, his hair being slightly frosted, his eyebrows bristly, and his whiskers cut back from his cheeks. His face was rather full and flabby, and yet it was not altogether a face without power. A few grog-blossoms marked the neighbourhood of his nose. He flung back his long drab greatcoat, revealing that beneath it he wore a suit of cinder-gray shade throughout, large heavy seals, of some metal or other that would take a polish, dangling from his fob as his only personal ornament. Shaking the water-drops from his low-crowned glazed hat, he said, "I must ask for a few minutes' shelter, comrades, or I shall be wetted to my skin before I get to Casterbridge."

"Make yourself at home, master," said the shepherd, perhaps a trifle less heartily than on the first occasion. Not that Fennel had the least tinge of niggardliness in his composition; but the room was far from large, spare chairs were not numerous, and damp companions were not altogether desirable at close quarters for the women and girls in their bright-coloured gowns.

However, the second comer, after taking off his greatcoat, and hanging his hat on a nail in one of the ceiling-beams as if he had been specially invited to put it there, advanced and sat down at the table. This had been pushed so closely into the chimney-corner, to give all available room to the dancers, that its inner edge grazed the elbow of the man who had ensconced him-

self by the fire; and thus the two strangers were brought into close companionship. They nodded to each other by way of breaking the ice of unacquaintance, and the first stranger handed his neighbour the family mug—a huge vessel of brown ware, having its upper edge worn away like a threshold by the rub of whole generations of thirsty lips that had gone the way of all flesh, and bearing the following inscription burnt upon its rotund side in yellow letters:—

THERE IS NO FUN
UNTILL i CUM.

The other man, nothing loth, raised the mug to his lips, and drank on, and on, and on—till a curious blueness overspread the countenance of the shepherd's wife, who had regarded with no little surprise the first stranger's free offer to the second of what did not belong to him to dispense.

"I knew it!" said the toper to the shepherd with much satisfaction. "When I walked up your garden before coming in, and saw the hives all of a row, I said to myself, 'Where there's bees there's honey, and where there's honey there's mead.' But mead of such a truly comfortable sort as this I really didn't expect to meet in my older days." He took yet another pull at the mug, till it assumed an ominous elevation.

"Glad you enjoy it!" said the shepherd warmly.

"It is goodish mead," assented Mrs. Fennel, with an absence of enthusiasm which seemed to say that it was possible to buy praise for one's cellar at too heavy a price. "It is trouble enough to make—and really I hardly think we shall make any more. For honey sells well, and we ourselves can make shift with a drop o' small mead and metheglin for common use from the comb-washings."

"O, but you'll never have the heart!" reproachfully cried the stranger in cinder-gray, after taking up the mug a third time and setting it down empty. "I love mead, when 'tis old like this, as I love to go to church o' Sundays, or to relieve the needy any day of the week."

"Ha, ha, ha!" said the man in the chimney-corner, who, in spite of the taciturnity induced by the pipe of tobacco, could not or would not refrain from this slight testimony to his comrade's humour.

Now the old mead of those days, brewed of the purest first-year or maiden honey, four pounds to the gallon—with its due complement of white of eggs, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, mace, rosemary, yeast, and processes of working, bottling, and cellaring—tasted remarkably strong; but it did not taste so strong as it actually was. Hence, presently, the stranger in cinder-gray at the table, moved by its creeping influence, unbuttoned his waistcoat, threw himself back in his chair, spread his legs, and made his presence felt in various ways.

"Well, well, as I say," he resumed, "I am going to Casterbridge, and to Casterbridge I must go. I should have been almost there by this time; but the rain drove me into your dwelling, and I'm not sorry for it."

"You don't live in Casterbridge?" said the shepherd.

"Not as yet; though I shortly mean to move there."

"Going to set up in trade, perhaps?"

"No, no," said the shepherd's wife. "It is easy to see that the gentleman is rich, and don't want to work at anything."

The cinder-gray stranger paused, as if to consider whether he would accept that definition of himself. He presently rejected it by answering, "Rich is not quite the word for me, dame. I do work, and I must work.

And even if I only get to Casterbridge by midnight I must begin work there at eight to-morrow morning. Yes, het or wet, blow or snow, famine or sword, my day's work to-morrow must be done."

"Poor man! Then, in spite o' seeming, you be worse off than we?" replied the shepherd's wife.

"'Tis the nature of my trade, men and maidens. 'Tis the nature of my trade more than my poverty. . . . But really and truly I must up and off, or I shan't get a lodging in the town." However, the speaker did not move, and directly added, "There's time for one more draught of friendship before I go; and I'd perform it at once if the mug were not dry."

"Here's a mug o' small," said Mrs. Fennel. "Small, we call it, though to be sure 'tis only the first wash o' the combs."

"No," said the stranger disdainfully. "I won't spoil your first kindness by partaking o' your second."

"Certainly not," broke in Fennel. "We don't increase and multiply every day, and I'll fill the mug again." He went away to the dark place under the stairs where the barrel stood. The shepherdess followed him.

"Why should you do this?" she said reproachfully, as soon as they were alone. "He's emptied it once, though it held enough for ten people; and now he's not contented wi' the small, but must needs call for more o' the strong! And a stranger unbeknown to any of us. For my part, I don't like the look o' the man at all."

"But he's in the house, my honey; and 'tis a wet night, and a christening. Daze it, what's a cup of mead more or less? There'll be plenty more next bee-burning."

"Very well—this time, then," she answered, looking wistfully at the barrel. "But what is the man's calling, and where is he one of, that he should come in and join us like this?"

"I don't know. I'll ask him again."

The catastrophe of having the mug drained dry at one pull by the stranger in cinder-gray was effectually guarded against this time by Mrs. Fennel. She poured out his allowance in a small cup, keeping the large one at a discreet distance from him. When he had tossed off his portion the shepherd renewed his inquiry about the stranger's occupation.

The latter did not immediately reply, and the man in the chimney-corner, with sudden demonstrativeness, said, "Anybody may know my trade—I'm a wheelwright."

"A very good trade for these parts," said the shepherd.

"And anybody may know mine—if they've the sense to find it out," said the stranger in cinder-gray.

"You may generally tell what a man is by his claws," observed the hedge-carpenter, looking at his own hands. "My fingers be as full of thorns as an old pin-cushion is of pins."

The hands of the man in the chimney-corner instinctively sought the shade, and he gazed into the fire as he resumed his pipe. The man at the table took up the hedge-carpenter's remark, and added smartly, "True; but the oddity of my trade is that, instead of setting a mark upon me, it sets a mark upon my customers."

No observation being offered by anybody in elucidation of this enigma, the shepherd's wife once more called for a song. The same obstacles presented themselves as at the former time—one had no voice, another

had forgotten the first verse. The stranger at the table, whose soul had now risen to a good working temperature, relieved the difficulty by exclaiming that, to start the company, he would sing himself. Thrusting one thumb into the arm-hole of his waistcoat, he waved the other hand in the air, and, with an extemporizing gaze at the shining sheep-crooks above the mantelpiece, began:—

"O my trade it is the rarest one,
Simple shepherds all—
My trade is a sight to see;
For my customers I tie, and take them up on high,
And waft 'em to a far countree!"

The room was silent when he had finished the verse—with one exception, that of the man in the chimney-corner, who, at the singer's word, "Chorus!" joined him in a deep bass voice of musical relish—

"And waft 'em to a far countree!"

Oliver Giles, John Pitcher the dairyman, the parish-clerk, the engaged man of fifty, the row of young women against the wall, seemed lost in thought not of the gayest kind. The shepherd looked meditatively on the ground, the shepherdess gazed keenly at the singer, and with some suspicion; she was doubting whether this stranger were merely singing an old song from recollection, or was composing one there and then for the occasion. All were as perplexed at the obscure revelation as the guests at Belshazzar's Feast, except the man in the chimney-corner, who quietly said, "Second verse, stranger," and smoked on.

The singer thoroughly moistened himself from his lips inwards, and went on with the next stanza as requested:—

"My tools are but common ones,
Simple shepherds all—
My tools are no sight to see:
A little hempen string, and a post whereon to swing,
Are implements enough for me!"

Shepherd Fennel glanced round. There was no longer any doubt that the stranger was answering his question rhythmically. The guests one and all started back with suppressed exclamations. The young woman engaged to the man of fifty fainted half-way, and would have proceeded, but finding him wanting in alacrity for catching her she sat down trembling.

"O, he's the ——!" whispered the people in the background, mentioning the name of an ominous public officer. "He's come to do it! 'Tis to be at Casterbridge jail to-morrow—the man for sheep-stealing—the poor clock-maker we heard of, who used to live away at Shottsford and had no work to do—Timothy Summers, whose family were a-starving, and so he went out of Shottsford by the high-road, and took a sheep in open daylight, defying the farmer and the farmer's wife and the farmer's lad, and every man jack among 'em. He" (and they nodded towards the stranger of the deadly trade) "is come from up the country to do it because there's not enough to do in his own county-town, and he's got the place here now our own county man's dead; he's going to live in the same cottage under the prison wall."

The stranger in cinder-gray took no notice of this whispered string of observations, but again wetted his lips. Seeing that his friend in the chimney-corner was the only one who reciprocated his joviality in any way, he held out his cup towards that appreciative comrade, who also held out his own. They clinked together, the eyes of the rest of the room hanging upon the singer's actions. He parted his lips for the third verse; but at that moment another knock was audible upon the door. This time the knock was faint and hesitating.

The company seemed scared; the shepherd looked

with consternation towards the entrance, and it was with some effort that he resisted his alarmed wife's deprecatory glance, and uttered for the third time the welcoming words, "Walk in!"

The door was gently opened, and another man stood upon the mat. He, like those who had preceded him, was a stranger. This time it was a short, small personage, of fair complexion, and dressed in a decent suit of dark clothes.

"Can you tell me the way to ——?" he began: when, gazing round the room to observe the nature of the company amongst whom he had fallen, his eyes lighted on the stranger in cinder-gray. It was just at the instant when the latter, who had thrown his mind into his song with such a will that he scarcely heeded the interruption, silenced all whispers and inquiries by bursting into his third verse:—

"To-morrow is my working day,
Simple shepherds all—
To-morrow is a working day for me:
For the farmer's sheep is slain, and the lad who did it ta'en,
And on his soul may God ha' merc-y!"

The stranger in the chimney-corner, waving cups with the singer so heartily that his mead splashed over on the hearth, repeated in his bass voice as before:—

"And on his soul may God ha' merc-y!"

All this time the third stranger had been standing in the doorway. Finding now that he did not come forward or go on speaking, the guests particularly regarded him. They noticed to their surprise that he stood before them the picture of abject terror—his knees trembling, his hand shaking so violently that the door-latch by which he supported himself rattled audibly: his white lips were parted, and his eyes fixed on the merry

officer of justice in the middle of the room. A moment more and he had turned, closed the door, and fled.

"What a man can it be?" said the shepherd.

The rest, between the awfulness of their late discovery and the odd conduct of this third visitor, looked as if they knew not what to think, and said nothing. Instinctively they withdrew further and further from the grim gentleman in their midst, whom some of them seemed to take for the Prince of Darkness himself, till they formed a remote circle, an empty space of floor being left between them and him—

". . . circulus, cujus centrum diabolus."

The room was so silent—though there were more than twenty people in it—that nothing could be heard but the patter of the rain against the window-shutters, accompanied by the occasional hiss of a stray drop that fell down the chimney into the fire, and the steady puffing of the man in the corner, who had now resumed his pipe of long clay.

The stillness was unexpectedly broken. The distant sound of a gun reverberated through the air—apparently from the direction of the county-town.

"Be jiggered!" cried the stranger who had sung the song, jumping up.

"What does that mean?" asked several.

"A prisoner escaped from the jail—that's what it means."

All listened. The sound was repeated, and none of them spoke but the man in the chimney-corner, who said quietly, "I've often been told that in this county they fire a gun at such times; but I never heard it till now."

"I wonder if it is *my* man?" murmured the personage in cinder-gray.

"Surely it is!" said the shepherd involuntarily. "And surely we've zeed him! That little man who looked in at the door by now, and quivered like a leaf when he zeed ye and heard your song!"

"His teeth chattered, and the breath went out of his body," said the dairyman.

"And his heart seemed to sink within him like a stone," said Oliver Giles.

"And he bolted as if he'd been shot at," said the hedge-carpenter.

"True—his teeth chattered, and his heart seemed to sink; and he bolted as if he'd been shot at," slowly summed up the man in the chimney-corner.

"I didn't notice it," remarked the hangman.

"We were all a-wondering what made him run off in such a fright," faltered one of the women against the wall, "and now 'tis explained!"

The firing of the alarm-gun went on at intervals, low and sullenly, and their suspicions became a certainty. The sinister gentleman in cinder-gray roused himself. "Is there a constable here?" he asked, in thick tones. "If so, let him step forward."

The engaged man of fifty stepped quavering out from the wall, his betrothed beginning to sob on the back of the chair.

"You are a sworn constable?"

"I be, sir."

"Then pursue the criminal at once, with assistance, and bring him back here. He can't have gone far."

"I will, sir, I will—when I've got my staff. I'll go home and get it, and come sharp here, and start in a body."

"Staff!—never mind your staff; the man'll be gone!"

"But I can't do nothing without my staff—can I,

William, and John, and Charles Jake? No; for there's the king's royal crown a painted on en in yaller and gold, and the lion and the unicorn, so as when I raise en up and hit my prisoner, 'tis made a lawful blow thereby. I wouldn't 'tempt to take up a man without my staff—no, not I. If I hadn't the law to gie me courage, why, instead o' my taking up him he might take up me!"

"Now, I'm a king's man myself, and can give you authority enough for this," said the formidable officer in gray. "Now then, all of ye, be ready. Have ye any lanterns?"

"Yes—have ye any lanterns?—I demand it!" said the constable.

"And the rest of you able-bodied—"

"Able-bodied men—yes—the rest of ye!" said the constable.

"Have you some good stout staves and pitch-forks—"

"Staves and pitchforks—in the name o' the law! And take 'em in yer hands and go in quest, and do as we in authority tell ye!"

Thus aroused, the men prepared to give chase. The evidence was, indeed, though circumstantial, so convincing, that but little argument was needed to show the shepherd's guests that after what they had seen it would look very much like connivance if they did not instantly pursue the unhappy third stranger, who could not as yet have gone more than a few hundred yards over such uneven country.

A shepherd is always well provided with lanterns; and, lighting these hastily, and with hurdle-staves in their hands, they poured out of the door, taking a direction along the crest of the hill, away from the town, the rain having fortunately a little abated.

Disturbed by the noise, or possibly by unpleasant dreams of her baptism, the child who had been christened began to cry heart-brokenly in the room overhead. These notes of grief came down through the chinks of the floor to the ears of the women below, who jumped up one by one, and seemed glad of the excuse to ascend and comfort the baby, for the incidents of the last half-hour greatly oppressed them. Thus in the space of two or three minutes the room on the ground-floor was deserted quite.

But it was not for long. Hardly had the sound of footsteps died away when a man returned round the corner of the house from the direction the pursuers had taken. Peeping in at the door, and seeing nobody there, he entered leisurely. It was the stranger of the chimney-corner, who had gone out with the rest. The motive of his return was shown by his helping himself to a cut piece of skimmer-cake that lay on a ledge beside where he had sat, and which he had apparently forgotten to take with him. He also poured out half a cup more mead from the quantity that remained, ravenously eating and drinking these as he stood. He had not finished when another figure came in just as quietly—his friend in cinder-gray.

"O—you here?" said the latter, smiling. "I thought you had gone to help in the capture." And this speaker also revealed the object of his return by looking solicitously round for the fascinating mug of old mead.

"And I thought you had gone," said the other, continuing his skimmer-cake with some effort.

"Well, on second thoughts, I felt there were enough without me," said the first confidentially, "and such a night as it is, too. Besides, 'tis the business o' the Government to take care of its criminals—not mine."

"True; so it is. And I felt as you did, that there were enough without me."

"I don't want to break my limbs running over the humps and hollows of this wild country."

"Nor I either, between you and me."

"These shepherd-people are used to it—simple-minded souls, you know, stirred up to anything in a moment. They'll have him ready for me before the morning, and no trouble to me at all."

"They'll have him, and we shall have saved ourselves all labour in the matter."

"True, true. Well, my way is to Casterbridge; and 'tis as much as my legs will do to take me that far. Going the same way?"

"No, I am sorry to say! I have to get home over there" (he nodded indefinitely to the right), "and I feel as you do, that it is quite enough for my legs to do before bedtime."

The other had by this time finished the mead in the mug, after which, shaking hands heartily at the door, and wishing each other well, they went their several ways.

In the meantime the company of pursuers had reached the end of the hog's-back elevation which dominated this part of the down. They had decided on no particular plan of action; and, finding that the man of the baleful trade was no longer in their company, they seemed quite unable to form any such plan now. They descended in all directions down the hill, and straightway several of the party fell into the snare set by Nature for all misguided midnight ramblers over this part of the cretaceous formation. The "lanchets," or flint slopes, which belted the escarpment at intervals

of a dozen yards, took the less cautious ones unawares, and losing their footing on the rubbly steep they slid sharply downwards, the lanterns rolling from their hands to the bottom, and there lying on their sides till the horn was scorched through.

When they had again gathered themselves together, the shepherd, as the man who knew the country best, took the lead, and guided them round these treacherous inclines. The lanterns, which seemed rather to dazzle their eyes and warn the fugitive than to assist them in the exploration, were extinguished, due silence was observed; and in this more rational order they plunged into the vale. It was a grassy, briery, moist defile, affording some shelter to any person who had sought it; but the party perambulated it in vain, and ascended on the other side. Here they wandered apart, and after an interval closed together again to report progress. At the second time of closing in they found themselves near a lonely ash, the single tree on this part of the coomb, probably sown there by a passing bird some fifty years before. And here, standing a little to one side of the trunk, as motionless as the trunk itself, appeared the man they were in quest of, his outline being well defined against the sky beyond. The band noiselessly drew up and faced him.

"Your money or your life!" said the constable sternly to the still figure.

"No, no," whispered John Pitcher. "'Tisn't our side ought to say that. That's the doctrine of vagabonds like him, and we be on the side of the law."

"Well, well," replied the constable impatiently; "I must say something, mustn't I? and if you had all the weight o' this undertaking upon your mind, perhaps

you'd say the wrong thing too!—Prisoner at the bar, surrender, in the name of the Father—the Crown, I mane!"

The man under the tree seemed now to notice them for the first time, and, giving them no opportunity whatever for exhibiting their courage, he strolled slowly towards them. He was, indeed, the little man, the third stranger; but his trepidation had in a great measure gone.

"Well, travellers," he said, "did I hear ye speak to me?"

"You did: you've got to come and be our prisoner at once!" said the constable. "We arrest 'ee on the charge of not abiding in Casterbridge jail in a decent proper manner to be hung to-morrow morning. Neighbours, do your duty, and seize the culpet!"

On hearing the charge, the man seemed enlightened, and, saying not another word, resigned himself with preternatural civility to the search-party, who, with their staves in their hands, surrounded him on all sides, and marched him back towards the shepherd's cottage.

It was eleven o'clock by the time they arrived. The light shining from the open door, a sound of men's voices within, proclaimed to them as they approached the house that some new events had arisen in their absence. On entering they discovered the shepherd's living-room to be invaded by two officers from Casterbridge jail, and a well-known magistrate who lived at the nearest country-seat, intelligence of the escape having become generally circulated.

"Gentlemen," said the constable, "I have brought back your man—not without risk and danger; but every one must do his duty! He is inside this circle of able-bodied persons, who have lent me useful aid,

considering their ignorance of Crown work. Men, bring forward your prisoner!" And the third stranger was led to the light.

"Who is this?" said one of the officials.

"The man," said the constable.

"Certainly not," said the turnkey; and the first corroborated his statement.

"But how can it be otherwise?" asked the constable. "Or why was he so terrified at sight o' the singing instrument of the law who sat there?" Here he related the strange behaviour of the third stranger on entering the house during the hangman's song.

"Can't understand it," said the officer coolly. "All I know is that it is not the condemned man. He's quite a different character from this one; a gauntish fellow, with dark hair and eyes, rather good-looking, and with a musical bass voice that if you heard it once you'd never mistake as long as you lived."

"Why, souls—'twas the man in the chimney-corner!"

"Hey—what?" said the magistrate, coming forward after inquiring particulars from the shepherd in the background. "Haven't you got the man after all?"

"Well, sir," said the constable, "he's the man we were in search of, that's true; and yet he's not the man we were in search of. For the man we were in search of was not the man we wanted, sir, if you understand my every-day way; for 'twas the man in the chimney-corner!"

"A pretty kettle of fish altogether!" said the magistrate. "You had better start for the other man at once."

The prisoner now spoke for the first time. The mention of the man in the chimney-corner seemed to have moved him as nothing else could do. "Sir," he said, stepping forward to the magistrate, "take no more

trouble about me. The time is come when I may as well speak. I have done nothing; my crime is that the condemned man is my brother. Early this afternoon I left home at Shottsford to tramp it all the way to Casterbridge jail to bid him farewell. I was benighted, and called here to rest and ask the way. When I opened the door I saw before me the very man, my brother, that I thought to see in the condemned cell at Casterbridge. He was in this chimney-corner; and jammed close to him, so that he could not have got out if he had tried, was the executioner who'd come to take his life, singing a song about it and not knowing that it was his victim who was close by, joining in to save appearances. My brother looked a glance of agony at me, and I knew he meant, 'Don't reveal what you see; my life depends on it.' I was so terror-struck that I could hardly stand, and, not knowing what I did, I turned and hurried away."

The narrator's manner and tone had the stamp of truth, and his story made a great impression on all around. "And do you know where your brother is at the present time?" asked the magistrate.

"I do not. I have never seen him since I closed this door."

"I can testify to that, for we've been between ye ever since," said the constable.

"Where does he think to fly to?—what is his occupation?"

"He's a watch-and-clock-maker, sir."

"'A said 'a was a wheelwright—a wicked rogue," said the constable.

"The wheels of clocks and watches he meant, no doubt," said Shepherd Fennel. "I thought his hands were palish for's trade."

"Well, it appears to me that nothing can be gained by retaining this poor man in custody," said the magistrate; "your business lies with the other, unquestionably."

And so the little man was released off-hand; but he looked nothing the less sad on that account, it being beyond the power of magistrate or constable to raze out the written troubles in his brain, for they concerned another whom he regarded with more solicitude than himself. When this was done, and the man had gone his way, the night was found to be so far advanced that it was deemed useless to renew the search before the next morning.

Next day, accordingly, the quest for the clever sheep-stealer became general and keen, to all appearance at least. But the intended punishment was cruelly disproportioned to the transgression, and the sympathy of a great many country-folk in that district was strongly on the side of the fugitive. Moreover, his marvellous coolness and daring in hob-and-nobbing with the hangman, under the unprecedented circumstances of the shepherd's party, won their admiration. So that it may be questioned if all those who ostensibly made themselves so busy in exploring woods and fields and lanes were quite so thorough when it came to the private examination of their own lofts and outhouses. Stories were afloat of a mysterious figure being occasionally seen in some old overgrown trackway or other, remote from turnpike roads; but when a search was instituted in any of these suspected quarters nobody was found. Thus the days and weeks passed without tidings.

In brief, the bass-voiced man of the chimney-corner was never recaptured. Some said that he went across the sea, others that he did not, but buried himself in the

depths of a populous city. At any rate, the gentleman in cinder-gray never did his morning's work at Casterbridge, nor met anywhere at all, for business purposes, the genial comrade with whom he had passed an hour of relaxation in the lonely house on the coomb.

The grass has long been green on the graves of Shepherd Fennel and his frugal wife; the guests who made up the christening party have mainly followed their entertainers to the tomb; the baby in whose honour they all had met is a matron in the sere and yellow leaf. But the arrival of the three strangers at the shepherd's that night, and the details connected therewith, is a story as well known as ever in the country about Higher Crowstairs.

—*Thomas Hardy*

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NEW YEAR'S EVE

Every man hath two birth-days: two days at least, in every year, which set him upon revolving the lapse of time, as it affects his mortal duration. The one is that which in an especial manner he termeth *his*. In the gradual desuetude of old observances, this custom of solemnizing our proper birth-day hath nearly passed away, or is left to children, who reflect nothing at all about the matter, nor understand anything in it beyond cake and orange. But the birth of a New Year is of an interest too wide to be pretermitted by king or cobbler. No one ever regarded the First of January with indifference. It is that from which all date their time, and count upon what is left. It is the nativity of our common Adam.

Of all sound of all bells—(bells, the music nighest bordering upon heaven)—most solemn and touching is the peal which rings out the Old Year. I never hear it without a gathering-up of my mind to a concentration of all the images that have been diffused over the past twelvemonth; all I have done or suffered, performed or neglected, in that regretted time. I begin to know its worth, as when a person dies. It takes a personal colour; nor was it a poetical flight in a contemporary, when he exclaimed—

> I saw the skirts of the departing Year.

It is no more than what in sober sadness every one of us seems to be conscious of, in that awful leave-taking. I am sure I felt it, and all felt it with me, last night; though some of my companions affected rather to mani-

fest an exhilaration at the birth of the coming year, than any very tender regrets for the decease of its predecessor. But I am none of those who—

> Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest.

I am naturally, beforehand, shy of novelties; new books, new faces, new years,—from some mental twist which makes it difficult in me to face the prospective. I have almost ceased to hope; and am sanguine only in the prospects of other (former) years. I plunge into foregone visions and conclusions. I encounter pell-mell with past disappointments. I am armour-proof against old discouragements. I forgive, or overcome in fancy, old adversaries. I play over again *for love*, as the gamesters phrase it, games for which I once paid so dear. I would scarce now have any of those untoward accidents and events of my life reversed. I would no more alter them than the incidents of some well-contrived novel. Methinks, it is better that I should have pined away seven of my goldenest years, when I was thrall to the fair hair, and fairer eyes, of Alice W—n, than that so passionate a love adventure should be lost. It was better that our family should have missed that legacy, which old Dorrell cheated us of, than that I should have at this moment two thousand pounds *in banco*, and be without the idea of that specious old rogue.

In a degree beneath manhood, it is my infirmity to look back upon those early days. Do I advance a paradox when I say, that, skipping over the intervention of forty years, a man may have leave to love *himself* without the imputation of self-love?

If I know aught of myself, no one whose mind is introspective—and mine is painfully so—can have a less respect for his present identity than I have for the man Elia. I

know him to be light, and vain, and humoursome; a notorious * * *; addicted to * * *; averse from counsel, neither taking it, nor offering it;—* * * besides; a stammering buffoon; what you will; lay it on, and spare not; I subscribe to it all, and much more, than thou canst be willing to lay at his door—but for the child Elia—that "other me," there, in the background—I must take leave to cherish the remembrance of that young master—with as little reference, I protest, to his stupid changeling of five-and-forty, as if it had been a child of some other house, and not of my parents. I can cry over its patient smallpox at five, and rougher medicaments. I can lay its poor fevered head upon the sick pillow at Christ's, and wake with it in surprise at the gentle posture of maternal tenderness hanging over it, that unknown had watched its sleep. I know how it shrank from any the least colour of falsehood.—God help thee, Elia, how art thou changed!—Thou art sophisticated.—I know how honest, how courageous (for a weakling) it was—how religious, how imaginative, how hopeful! From what have I not fallen, if the child I remember was indeed myself,—and not some dissembling guardian, presenting a false identity, to give the rule to my unpractised steps, and regulate the tone of my moral being!

That I am fond of indulging, beyond a hope of sympathy, in such retrospection, may be the symptom of some sickly idiosyncrasy. Or is it owing to another cause: simply, that being without wife or family, I have not learned to project myself enough out of myself; and having no offspring of my own to dally with, I turn back upon memory, and adopt my own early idea, as my heir and favourite? If these speculations seem fantastical to thee, Reader (a busy man, perchance), if I tread out of the way of thy sympathy, and am singularly conceited only, I

retire, impenetrable to ridicule, under the phantom cloud of Elia.

The elders, with whom I was brought up, were of a character not likely to let slip the sacred observance of any old institution; and the ringing out of the Old Year was kept by them with circumstances of peculiar ceremony.—In those days the sound of those midnight chimes, though it seemed to raise hilarity in all around me, never failed to bring a train of pensive imagery into my fancy. Yet I then scarce conceived what it meant, or thought of it as a reckoning that concerned me. Not childhood alone, but the young man till thirty, never feels practically that he is mortal. He knows it indeed, and, if need were, he could preach a homily on the fragility of life; but he brings it not home to himself, any more than in a hot June we can appropriate to our imagination the freezing days of December. But now, shall I confess a truth?—I feel these audits but too powerfully. I begin to count the probabilities of my duration, and to grudge at the expenditure of moments and shortest periods, like misers' farthings. In proportion as the years both lessen and shorten, I set more count upon their periods, and would fain lay my ineffectual finger upon the spoke of the great wheel. I am not content to pass away "like a weaver's shuttle." Those metaphors solace me not, nor sweeten the unpalatable draught of mortality. I care not to be carried with the tide, that smoothly bears human life to eternity; and reluct at the inevitable course of destiny. I am in love with this green earth; the face of town and country; the unspeakable rural solitudes, and the sweet security of streets. I would set up my tabernacle here. I am content to stand still at the age to which I am arrived; I, and my friends: to be no younger, no richer, no handsomer. I do not want to be weaned by age; or drop, like

mellow fruit, as they say, into the grave.—Any alteration, on this earth of mine, in diet or in lodging, puzzles and discomposes me. My household-gods plant a terrible fixed foot, and are not rooted up without blood. They do not willingly seek Lavinian shores. A new state of being staggers me.

Sun, and sky, and breeze, and solitary walks, and summer holidays, and the greenness of fields, and the delicious juices of meats and fishes, and society, and the cheerful-glass, and candle-light, and fireside conversations, and innocent vanities, and jests, and *irony itself*—do these things go out with life?

Can a ghost laugh, or shake his gaunt sides, when you are pleasant with him?

And you, my midnight darlings, my Folios; must I part with the intense delight of having you (huge armfuls) in my embraces? Must knowledge come to me, if it come at all, by some awkward experiment of intuition, and no longer by this familiar process of reading?

Shall I enjoy friendships there, wanting the smiling indications which point me to them here,—the recognizable face—the "sweet assurance of a look"?

In winter this intolerable disinclination to dying—to give it its mildest name—does more especially haunt and beset me. In a genial August noon, beneath a sweltering sky, death is almost problematic. At those times do such poor snakes as myself enjoy an immortality. Then we expand and burgeon. Then we are as strong again, as valiant again, as wise again, and a great deal taller. The blast that nips and shrinks me, puts me in thoughts of death. All things allied to the insubstantial, wait upon that master feeling; cold, numbness, dreams, perplexity; moonlight itself, with its shadowy and spectral appearances,—that cold ghost of the sun, or Phœbus' sickly

sister, like that innutritious one denounced in the Canticles:—I am none of her minions—I hold with the Persian.

Whatsoever thwarts, or puts me out of my way, brings death unto my mind. All partial evils, like humours, run into that capital plague-sore.—I have heard some profess an indifference to life. Such hail the end of their existence as a port of refuge; and speak of the grave as of some soft arms, in which they may slumber as on a pillow. Some have wooed death—but out upon thee, I say, thou foul, ugly phantom! I detest, abhor, execrate, and (with Friar John) give thee to six score thousand devils, as in no instance to be excused or tolerated, but shunned as an universal viper; to be branded, proscribed, and spoken evil of! In no way can I be brought to digest thee, thou thin, melancholy *Privation*, or more frightful and confounding *Positive!*

Those antidotes, prescribed against the fear of thee, are altogether frigid and insulting, like thyself. For what satisfaction hath a man, that he shall "lie down with kings and emperors in death," who in his lifetime never greatly coveted the society of such bed-fellows?—or, forsooth, that "so shall the fairest face appear"?—why, to comfort me, must Alice W—n be a goblin? More than all, I conceive disgust at those impertinent and misbecoming familiarities, inscribed upon your ordinary tombstones. Every dead man must take upon himself to be lecturing me with his odious truism, that "Such as he now is I must shortly be." Not so shortly, friend, perhaps, as thou imaginest. In the meantime I am alive. I move about. I am worth twenty of thee. Know thy betters! Thy New Years' days are past. I survive, a jolly candidate for 1821. Another cup of wine—and while that turncoat bell, that just now mourn-

fully chanted the obsequies of 1820 departed, with changed notes lustily rings in a successor, let us attune to its peal the song made on a like occasion, by hearty, cheerful Mr. Cotton.

THE NEW YEAR

Hark, the cock crows, and yon bright star
Tells us, the day himself's not far;
And see where, breaking from the night,
He gilds the western hills with light.
With him old Janus doth appear,
Peeping into the future year,
With such a look as seems to say
The prospect is not good that way.
Thus do we rise ill sights to see,
And 'gainst ourselves to prophesy;
When the prophetic fear of things
A more tormenting mischief brings,
More full of soul-tormenting gall
Than direst mischiefs can befall.
But stay! but stay! methinks my sight,
Better informed by clearer light,
Discerns sereneness in that brow
That all contracted seemed but now,
His revers'd face may show distaste,
And frown upon the ills are past;
But that which this way looks is clear,
And smiles upon the New-born Year.
He looks too from a place so high,
The year lies open to his eye;
And all the moments open are
To the exact discoverer.
Yet more and more he smiles upon
The happy revolution.
Why should we then suspect or fear
The influences of a year,
So smiles upon us the first morn,
And speaks us good so soon as born?
Plague on't! the last was ill enough,
This cannot but make better proof;
Or, at the worst, as we brush'd through
The last, why so we may this too;
And then the next in reason shou'd
Be superexcellently good:
For the worst ills (we daily see)
Have no more perpetuity
Than the best fortunes that do fall;

Which also bring us wherewithal
Longer their being to support,
Than those do of the other sort:
And who has one good year in three,
And yet repines at destiny,
Appears ungrateful in the case,
And merits not the good he has.
Then let us welcome the New Guest
With lusty brimmers of the best:
Mirth always should Good Fortune meet,
And renders e'en Disaster sweet:
And though the Princess turn her back,
Let us but line ourselves with sack,
We better shall by far hold out,
Till the next year she face about.

How say you, Reader—do not these verses smack of the rough magnanimity of the old English vein? Do they not fortify like a cordial; enlarging the heart, and productive of sweet blood, and generous spirits, in the concoction? Where be those puling fears of death, just now expressed or affected?—Passed like a cloud—absorbed in the purging sunlight of clear poetry—clean washed away by a wave of genuine Helicon, your only Spa for these hypochondries. And now another cup of the generous! and a merry New Year, and many of them to you all, my masters!

—*Charles Lamb*

NOTES ON PART I

Page 10—**Alan Sullivan:** contemporary writer, born and educated in Ontario.

Page 12, l. 2—**Latins:** peoples speaking languages developed from Latin—l. 30—**Barnum** (d. 1891): best known of American showmen, owned a circus, menagerie, museum, etc.

Page 13, ll. 13-15. See *post* p. 14, l. 9—l. 31—**Lord Roberts** (d. 1914): British general, advocate of universal military training.

Page 14, l. 7—**C. B. Fry:** contemporary, all-round University athlete; l. 14—**Eton:** best-known and most aristocratic of English "Public Schools."

Page 15, l. 26—**Magersfontein:** where the British suffered repulse in the Boer War.

Page 16, l. 1—**Clemenceau:** French politician and prime minister, 1917-20.

Page 17—This extract is part of an address to the undergraduates of a New Jersey college.

Page 20, l. 2—**Goethe** (1749-1832): greatest of German poets.

Page 22, ll. 3-6—**Spenser** (1552-99): his chief work, the **Faery Queene,** contains nearly 35,000 lines; l. 4—**Macaulay** (1800-59): historian and essayist, says: "Not one in a hundred perseveres to the end," in his *Essay on Southey's Edition of the Pilgrim's Progress.*

Page 24—**James, Viscount Bryce** (1839-1922): Oxford professor, historian, ambassador to the United States.

Page 32, l. 26—**St. Michael's:** variety of orange commonly sold in England.

Page 34, l. 30—**tale of bricks:** see *Exodus,* v. 6-8.

Page 35, l. 22—**Mrs. Gamp:** the immortal, though disreputable, nurse in *Martin Chuzzlewit.*

Page 37—**Rooks:** common English species of crow—not a little in its habits resembling our crows.

Page 38, l. 19—Description of cries of hounds in *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* IV. i.—l. 29—**Gilbert White** (1720-93): early and attractive chronicler of observations of nature in *The Natural History of Selborne.*

Page 39, l. 1—**Kirkman:** see *post,* p. 40, l. 26.

Page 42—**J. A. Thomson:** professor of Natural History in Aberdeen, writer, specially successful in popular treatment of scientific subjects.

Page 46, ll. 3-4—One line from Tennyson's *Lotus-Eaters;* not accurately quoted.

Page 49—Peter McArthur (d. 1924), born on a farm in Middlesex, Ontario, entered literature through journalism in New York and Toronto; spent his later years after 1908 at the old homestead.

Page 51, l. 30—**the Underground** railway in London—l. 31—**Tamerlane:** Asiatic conqueror who about the close of the 14th century harried the neighbouring nations; ll. 33-34—**Herod** in the old biblical dramas is represented as a violent and ranting character; cf. *Hamlet*, III, ii.

Page 64—**Katherine Mansfield:** pseudonym of Kathleen Beauchamp, born in New Zealand, educated in London. Thither she returned on attaining womanhood and began to write for literary periodicals. She was hampered by ill-health, and just as she was attaining to full mastery of her genius, she died of heart-trouble and tuberculosis. The vivid truth and exquisite beauty of her short stories give her a high place among the writers of her time.

Page 66, l. 23—**Bernard Shaw:** one of the best known of living writers; dramatist, critic, essayist; l. 24—**Ascot:** annually the scene of one of the most fashionable of English horse races.

Page 69, l. 14 fol.—translated into prose: "If you know not how to live rightly, give place to those who are more skilled. You have played and eaten and drunk enough; it is time for you to go, lest having drunk too freely you may be mocked and driven from the feast by those of an age fitted to be sprightly with better grace"; l. 22—**Epicurus:** ancient Greek philosopher who taught that the highest good is happiness, while the **Stoics** placed it in obedience to duty, virtue, self-control.

Page 72, l. 2—**Bach, Velasquez, Phidias:** three artists of the first rank—a German composer of music (d. 1750), a Spanish painter (d. 1660), and a Greek sculptor (b. 500 B.C.).

Page 73, l. 4—**Watts** (1674-1748): "great naturalist" is ironical; best known as a writer of hymns, especially for children; some of these, until recent times, were familiar to almost every English-speaking child, for example, the one vaguely recalled by Mr. Milne; the first stanza runs—

How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day
From every opening flower.

Page 76—**A. A. Milne** is a contributor to *Punch*, writer of humorous plays, essays, sketches, and of children's books.

Page 77—**Meinam:** at the head of the Bight of Bangkok; the geographical names in this selection may be found on the map of the Malay Archipelago.

Page 130—**Joseph Conrad:** born in Poland of Polish parents, educated in Cracow; in 1874, moved by a strong natural bent went to sea; in 1878 first set foot in England and joined the crew of an English vessel as a common sailor; rose to be a "Master" in the English Merchant Service in 1884, when also he became an English citizen. In 1894, he took up his residence in England in order to devote himself to novel writing; in 1895 published his first, *Almayer's Folly*, and in time won a place as one of our great novelists.

Page 132, l. 29—**Sir Martin Conway** (1856-) has published accounts of his own mountaineering experiences: professor of Art at Cambridge.

Page 134, l. 4—**Birds and Man:** name of the volume of which *Geese* forms a part.

Page 137, l. 23—**Mendips:** hills in Somersetshire—**W. H. Hudson,** born in South America, where he spent his early life; after 1869 resident in England; perhaps the finest observer of nature and most exquisite writer of prose among his contemporaries.

Page 138—The reader will remember that this account was published in 1915.

Page 142—**W. H. Blake** (1861-1924): born and lived in Canada; Toronto lawyer; best known by his translation of Hémon's *Marie Chapdelaine* (1921).

NOTES ON PART II

Page 143—This chapter, from *The Prospector,* depicts a match between Toronto and McGill universities in the early '80's when the writer was himself a student in Toronto. **Ralph Connor** is the pseudonym of the Rev. Charles W. Gordon, the well-known Canadian novelist, a native of Glengarry, Ontario, then a thoroughly Highland community. The reader will note that Mrs. Macgregor, the hero's mother, exhibits Gaelic influences, e.g., in her speech—use of the future tense for the present, etc. (see p. 157, ll. 15, 16).

Page 156, l. 2—**rouge:** a touchdown behind one's own goal.

Page 172, l. 10—**Euphues:** a novel published in 1579, much admired in its own day, but its paucity of incidents, moralizing, and artificial style make it dull to a modern reader.

Page 175, l. 3—**Galileo** (1564-1642): Italian astronomer, inventor of the telescope, and advocate of the theory that the earth moves about the sun. When condemned for his heresy, and in dread of imprisonment and torture, he publicly recanted; (as the story goes) at the close of his recantation, **"Eppur si muove,"** i.e., "yet it does move," he uttered below his breath; l. 21—**Joshua:** see *Joshua,* x, vv. 12-13.

Page 179, l. 2—**Buckingham Palace:** the royal residence in London; l. 14—Johnson said this in ordinary talk; see Boswell's *Life of Johnson* under date 1768.

Page 180, l. 5—See *Paradise Lost,* vi, 768—l. 16—**the sweet o' the year:** see *Winter's Tale,* IV. iii. 3; l. 17—**Jewel,** etc.: a Tennysonian periphrasis for a beautiful phrase:

> And quoted odes, and jewels five-words long
> That on the stretch'd forefinger of all Time
> Sparkle for ever:
>
> *The Princess,* Canto ii.

—l. 24—See Shakespeare, *Sonnet* xxxiii—l. 29—From *To Dr. Blacklock.*

Page 181, l. 21—**A Shropshire Lad:** a small volume of exquisite lyrics, pub. 1896, by A. E. Housman; the whole of No. XI is quoted here; l. 35—See Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner,* Canto iii.

Page 182, l. 6—**Raleigh** (d. 1922): professor of English literature in Oxford and writer of critical works.

Page 202—**Katherine Mansfield:** see note *ante* on p. 64.

Page 203, l. 4—**Ann Whitefield:** a character in G. B. Shaw's play, **Man and Superman**; l. 19—**Sterne** (1713-1768): author of **Tristram Shandy** and *The Sentimental Journey;* in the latter may be found the episode alluded to in ll. 23-4; l. 28 fol.—The two couplets are from *The Corsair*, Canto ii, xv.

Page 204, l. 7—**Theresa:** a character in Goethe's (see note *ante* on p. 20) novel *Wilhelm Meister*; ll. 21-2—See *Æneid*, x, 343. Euryalus, though the winner of a race, wept because his dearest friend had lost it; "the grace of his tears and the beauty of his form made his merit seem the greater"; l. 31—**Lobby:** the precincts of the House to which newspaper men, etc., may be admitted; l. 33—**Stradivarius:** the most valued make of violin.

Page 205, l. 13—**Walpole:** Home Secretary in 1866 when the railings of **Hyde Park** in London were torn down by a mob who found the gates locked to prevent them holding a meeting in favour of the Reform bill; l. 29—**Rossini** (1792-1868): Italian composer of operas; l. 30—**Paganini** (1784-1840): Italian violinist.

Page 212—**Peter McArthur:** See note *ante* on p. 49.

Page 218, ll. 20-1—**Hamilton** took the most important part in framing the Constitution; **Adams** was the second, and **Madison** the fourth President of the U.S.A.; **Marshall**: Chief Justice from 1801-35, was regarded as the greatest of the Chief Justices.

Page 219, l. 34—**Gettysburg:** where Lee was defeated in '63, was dedicated as a national cemetery, and Lincoln, as President, made on that occasion his famous speech.

Page 223—**Bryce:** See note *ante* on p. 24.

Page 224, l. 21—**city of the Golden Gate:** San Francisco; **Bagdad:** the scene of the marvellous events of the *Arabian Nights;* l. 28—**Rand and McNally:** Chicago publishers of gazetteers, guide-books, etc., from one of which, presumably, the passages in small type are taken; the writer thus brings into contrast the prosaic aspect of Nashville as ordinarily seen, with its romantic possibilities such as narrated in his story.

Page 225, l. 14—**Sydney Carton:** Sydney Carton is a character in the *Tale of Two Cities;* the episode referred to occurs near the close of the novel; l. 19—**laggniappe:** a dialectic word found in the Southern States meaning a "tip"; l. 33—**en brochette:** on a skewer.

Page 227, l. 12—**Jefferson Brick:** a journalist whom Martin Chuzzlewit encounters in New York, and who persistently indulges in the practice referred to in this paragraph; l. 21—Parody of Tennyson: see *Locksley Hall, Sixty Years After.*

Page 228, l. 11—**Prince Albert:** a double-breasted coat with tails, much worn in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, and seemingly retained later among Southern gentlemen; l. 12—**Sherman** and **Longstreet** (l. 16): generals in the Civil War; l. 13—**Dixie:** Southern patriotic song; l. 15—**Wurzburger:** a kind of beer; l. 18—**Fort Sumter:** in South Carolina where the Civil War opened; l. 19—**Appomattox:** in Virginia where it was closed by Lee's surrender; l. 26—**Nod:** see *Genesis*, iv, 16.

Page 230, l. 21—**Cettiwayo:** Zulu leader in the war against the British in the '70's.

Page 234, l. 23—**Andrew Jackson:** successful general, and President of the United States from 1829-37.

Page 235, l. 9—**Thomas:** See passage in small print at foot of p. 226 *ante*; **Cumberland:** a river in Tennessee.

Page 243—**O. Henry:** i.e., W. S. Porter (1862-1910), born in North Carolina; after a very chequered career which included a term of imprisonment for alleged embezzlement, settled in New York as a writer of short stories. He was a prolific writer and naturally uneven in his work; he always wrote with a certain facility and dash in a decidedly American style, and at his best shows exceptional mastery of the short story.

Page 249—**Joseph Conrad:** See note *ante* on p. 130.

Page 252, l. 30—**Rucksack:** knapsack.

Page 254, l. 9—**Æsculapius:** according to the ancient Greeks, the divine patron and practiser of medicine; l. 29—the opening line of Young's (1683-1765) poem *Night Thoughts*, misquoted here; "calm" should read "tired."

Page 257, l. 3—See *The Ode to Melancholy*; ll. 9-10—**Mrs. Gummidge** in *David Copperfield* and **Mark Tapley** in *Martin Chuzzlewit* persistently take a dark and bright view of life respectively; l. 24—**W. S. Gilbert** (1836-1911): author of the libretto of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, *The Mikado*, etc.

Page 258, l. 15—**Blackpool:** Seaside resort not far from Liverpool.

Page 261—**Markheim** is a symbolic presentation of the struggle between good and evil in man's soul.

NOTES ON PART III

Page 300—**C. G. D. Roberts** was born and educated in New Brunswick, first made a reputation as a poet; for many years has written fiction mainly, and is specially known by his animal stories.

Page 301, l. 24—**Nietzsche** (1844-1900): German philosophical writer who has exercised a great influence on European thought.

Page 305, l. 20—**Proteus:** the prophetic old man of the sea who had the power of transforming himself into various forms; l. 26—**Sir Boyle Roche** (1743-1807): an M.P. notorious for his Irish bulls; there is here a reference to one of them—presumably.

Page 308, ll. 20-22—**Sir Anthony Absolute** and the other personages mentioned are characters in Sheridan's *Rivals*, a play first acted in 1775, and still frequently performed.

Page 310, l. 29—**the Bank:** the office of the Bank of England in the business centre of London.

Page 313, l. 4—**Chesterfield:** The Earl of (1694-1773), in his own day a prominent personage in fashionable, literary, and political circles; now known mainly by his *Letters to His Son*, (pub. 1774), where he gives precepts as to etiquette and general behaviour.

Page 315, l. 18—**Hamerton** (1834-1894): writer on scenery, art, etc.; l. 32—Thoreau's **Walden** or *Life in the Woods* is a book in which the New England writer Thoreau (1817-1862) tells of two years of retirement from the world, spent in intercourse with nature.

Page 334—**Mrs. Freeman:** born Wilkins; she began in 1887 writing short stories depicting the uneventful life of quiet towns and villages of her native New England. The fidelity of her pictures and her grasp of human nature give these stories a very high place.

Page 335, ll. 1-2—**Spectator** and **Blackwood's:** two well-known periodicals still in existence; l. 5—**Christopher North:** pseudonym for John Wilson (1785-1854), Scottish man of letters and professor; in his day most important contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine*, where he wrote a series of papers—*Noctes Ambrosianæ*—in the form of dialogues; in one of these the poem referred to occurs. l. 6—**Galt, John** (1779-1839): Scottish man of letters; in 1826 came to Canada as agent of The Canada Company; he was engaged in promoting the settlement of the "Queen's Bush," and within its limits founded Guelph and Goderich. He is best known by his realistic pictures of Scottish life in his novels—**The Ettrick Shepherd** (1770-1835), a simple shepherd of the Scottish Borders who attained fame in letters especially by his songs and ballads; l. 9—**Junius Letters**, dealing with political topics of the day, appeared in a newspaper, 1769-1772; there has been much doubt as to the author, but they are usually ascribed to Sir Philip Francis; l. 23—**Samoa:** an island in the Pacific where Robert Louis Stevenson spent his last years and died.

Page 337, l. 31—from the opening of *Endymion*; ll. 31-4—from *Ode to a Nightingale.*

Page 338, l. 2—from opening of *Hyperion.*

Page 339—**Alpha of the Plough:** see *ante*, p. 36.

Page 379—**Walter de la Mare:** has distinguished himself as a writer of poetry, of children's verses, and of fiction; he is specially successful in suggesting an atmosphere of the supernatural or mystical.

Page 380—**The Bogey of Space:** A sense of profound uneasiness and horror when one attempts to realize the actual existence of endless space, is a not uncommon experience, not merely in the case of mature and thoughtful adults but even of children; this is the bogey of which Mr. Priestley writes. He bases himself on the fact that the conceptions with which science deals are abstractions, although they may be successfully applied to individual things or events; but it is these latter that are the realities. He is strengthened in this idea by the views of the greatest of living thinkers, Einstein, who seems able to dispense with the assumption of the existence of space and time which has long and universally been accepted as fundamental; l. 1—**Lafcadio Hearn** (1850-1904): of mixed Irish and Greek descent, became a journalist in the United States, visited Japan, and was so attracted that he was naturalized there, married a Japanese, and settled down as professor of English Literature in one of the colleges; l. 8—**Herbert Spencer** (1820-1903): the most outstanding English philosopher of his day; his philosophy is closely linked with modern science and the theory of evolution.

Page 381, l. 25—**Blake, William** (1757-1827), poet, author of the *Songs of Innocence*, etc.; he emphasized the spiritual and mystical side of life.

Page 382, ll. 10-12—See *Hamlet*, II, ii.

Page 384, l. 29—**Einstein, Albert:** A German of Jewish race, born 1879; mathematical physicist, astronomer, and philosophic thinker; expounder of the theory of Relativity which is working a revolution in conceptions of time, space, and gravity; he is held to be the most profound and original thinker of his time.

Page 391—**Stephen Leacock:** the well-known Canadian humorist, born in England 1869, but was brought to Canada as an infant and in Canada his life has been spent; professor in McGill University.

Page 392, l. 4—**Coombs:** hollows or valleys in the flank of a hill; **ewe-leases:** pastures for ewes; l. 16—**Timon:** a Greek misanthrope of the fifth century B.C.; see Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*.

Page 420—**Thomas Hardy:** the greatest of our recent novelists; he was born in Dorsetshire and spent practically his whole life there; this county, under the name of Wessex, he has made the scene of his novels, and its people (at least the middle and lower classes), customs, language, etc., are reflected in their pages. (1840-1928.)

Page 421—Lamb has a taste for somewhat antiquated words and forms; he is specially influenced by the great prose writers of the seventeenth century.

Page 421, l. 22—**a contemporary:** Coleridge; the quotation is from his *Ode to the Departing Year*, early version.

Page 422. l. 4—the quotation is from Pope's *Odyssey*, xv, l. 83.

Page 424, l. 24—**like a weaver's shuttle:** Job, vii, 6.

Page 425, l. 5—**Lavinian shores:** from the second line of the *Æneid;* there used of Italy where Æneas was to find a new home.

Page 425, l. 34—**Phœbus' sickly sister:** the moon.

Page 426, l. 1—**Canticles:** *Song of Solomon*, viii, 8.

Page 426, l. 12—**Friar John:** See Rabelais' *Pantagruel*.

Page 427, l. 4—**Mr. Cotton** (1630-87): minor poet; better known as the translator of the first essayist Montaigne.